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LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

XX

WHAT IS ART?

WHAT IS RELIGION?

1893. Juli

THE NOVELS AND OTHER WORKS OF

LYOF N. TOLSTOÏ

WHAT IS ART?

WHAT IS RELIGION?

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS
1904

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INTRODUCTION

In answer to the question, "What is Art?" Count Tolstoï analyzes and tests the various definitions of Art given by other writers. He shows up with merciless severity what he considers the fallacy in the popular delusion that the fetish of Art pardons bestiality, obscenity, and whatever conduces to stimulating the passions. The work is strongly controversial, and attacks unsparingly many current conceptions, as, for instance, that "Art is the manifestation of some mysterious idea of God," or "the expression of man's emotions by external signs," or the production of pleasing objects.

Tolstoï believes that Art has a loftier function. He proceeds elaborately to argue in favor of a universal activity, a union among men so that they may have the same noble feelings, and may progress together toward individual and general well-being. "Art for art's sake" is meaningless to him.

It is interesting to notice that the most original and independent of the French critics has recently taken practically the same ground in a lecture, in which he asserts that it is the critic's business to test Art and Literature, and that Art has a most intimate relation with morality.

The discussion of "What is Religion?" will be found to bear more than a literary or ethical interest, when the late disagreement between Tolstoï and the Russian Church is recalled to mind. Here he sets forth the tenets of his own broad creed. He defines Religion as "the establishment by man of such a relation to the Infinite Life around him, as, while connecting his life with this Infinitude and directing his conduct, is also in agreement with his reason and with human knowledge."

Upon this basis of a religion founded upon reason he stands flatly, although such position has often been found shifting sands. "Reason was termed the source of error," he says again, "and the Gospel was interpreted not as common sense demands, but as those who composed the Church desired." Nevertheless, in view of his present beliefs, which question many of the fundamental truths of the Bible, one does not see how his Church could avoid refusing him the sacrament; for he follows Voltaire at more than one point, while yet adhering to the "true religion, that is, a true relation to the source of all, — God."

Of scarcely less import, though a much shorter article, is the succeeding paper "On Religious Tolerance." Here he sounds the note of the prophet — and the iconoclast. Then come a score of essays and letters, not one of which is without its interest. Nearly all of them are of theological trend. We cannot give the bent of his mind better than by quoting once more from the author, where he takes issue with Coleridge and says: "I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than my peace; then I loved Christianity more than my Church; and now I love the Truth more than anything in the world. And until now the Truth coincides for me with Christianity as I understand it; and I profess this Christianity, and in that measure in which I do profess it I peacefully and joyously live and peacefully and joyously am approaching death."

The various translations are in each case authorized. Mr. Aylmer Maude, translator of "What is Art?" has had the benefit of the author's suggestions in regard to certain points. The other essays were translated by V. Tchertkoff and A. C. Fifield.

CONTENTS

WHAT IS ART?

PAGE

INTRODUCTION v

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE xv

AUTHOR'S PREFACE xvii

CHAPTER I

Time and labor spent on art — Lives stunted in its service — Morality sacrificed to and anger justified by art — The rehearsal of an opera described 1

CHAPTER II

Does art compensate for so much evil? — What is art? — Confusion of opinions — Is it "that which produces beauty"? — The word "beauty" in Russian — Chaos in æsthetics 7

CHAPTER III

Summary of various æsthetic theories and definitions, from Baumgarten to to-day 16

CHAPTER IV

Definitions of art founded on beauty — Taste not definable — A clear definition needed to enable us to recognize works of art . . 32

CHAPTER V

Definitions not founded on beauty — Tolstoï's definition — The extent and necessity of art — How people in the past have distinguished good from bad in art 39

CHAPTER VI

PAGE

How art for pleasure has come into esteem — Religions indicate what is considered good and bad — Church Christianity — The Renaissance — Skepticism of the upper classes — They confound beauty with goodness 45

CHAPTER VII

An æsthetic theory framed to suit this view of life 52

CHAPTER VIII

Who have adopted it? — Real art needful for all men — Our art too expensive, too unintelligible, and too harmful for the masses — The theory of "the elect" in art 57

CHAPTER IX

Perversion of our art — It has lost its natural subject-matter — Has no flow of fresh feeling — Transmits chiefly three base emotions 62

CHAPTER X

Loss of comprehensibility — Decadent art — Recent French art — Have we a right to say it is bad and that what we like is good art? — The highest art has always been comprehensible to normal people — What fails to infect normal people is not art 68

CHAPTER XI

Counterfeits of art produced by: Borrowing; Imitating; Striking; Interesting — Qualifications needful for production of real works of art, and those sufficient for production of counterfeits . . 92

CHAPTER XII

Causes of production of counterfeits — Professionalism — Criticism — Schools of art 102

CHAPTER XIII

PAGE

Wagner's "Nibelung's Ring" a type of counterfeit art — Its success, and the reasons thereof 111

CHAPTER XIV

Truths fatal to preconceived views are not readily recognized — Proportion of works of art to counterfeits — Perversion of taste and incapacity to recognize art — Examples 124

CHAPTER XV

THE QUALITY OF ART, CONSIDERED APART FROM ITS SUBJECT-MATTER — The sign of art: Infectiousness — Incomprehensible to those whose taste is perverted — Conditions of infection: Individuality; Clearness; Sincerity 132

CHAPTER XVI

THE QUALITY OF ART, CONSIDERED ACCORDING TO ITS SUBJECT-MATTER — The better the feeling the better the art — The cultured crowd — The religious perception of our age — The new ideals put fresh demands to art — Art unites — Religious art — Universal art — Both coöperate to one result — The new appraisement of art — Bad art — Examples of art — How to test a work claiming to be art 135

CHAPTER XVII

Results of absence of true art — Results of perversion of art: Labor and lives spent on what is useless and harmful — The abnormal life of the rich — Perplexity of children and plain folk — Confusion of right and wrong — Nietzsche and Redbeard — Superstition, Patriotism, and Sensuality 153

CHAPTER XVIII

The purpose of human life is the brotherly union of man — Art must be guided by this perception 163

CHAPTER XIX

PAGE

The art of the future not a possession of a select minority, but a means toward perfection and unity 166

CHAPTER XX

The connection between science and art — The mendacious sciences; the trivial sciences — Science should deal with the great problems of human life, and serve as a basis for art 173

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I 184
APPENDIX II 186
APPENDIX III 193
APPENDIX IV 198

WHAT IS RELIGION?

What is Religion? (1902). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* . 207
On Religious Tolerance (1902) " " " " " . 255
Notes for Officers (1901) " " " " " . 265
Notes for Soldiers (1901) " " " " " . 273
True Criticism (1901) " " " " " . 282
The Only Means (1901) " " " " " . 291
My Reply to the Synod (1901) " " " " " . 310
Thou Shalt Not Kill (1900). *Translated by Mrs. Maude* . . 320
How Shall We Escape? (1898). *Translated by Mrs. N. and A. C. F.* 328
Recent Private and Other Letters:
On the Religious Relation to Life (1902). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 340
On the Nobel Prize (1902). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 341
To a Personal Friend (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 342
To an Italian Press Correspondent (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 343

PAGE

To a Swiss Pastor (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 344
To a Russian Priest (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 346
To the Manchester Tolstoi Society (1901). *Written in English* 348
To A. M. on the Same Subject (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 350
An Earlier Letter and Diary Entry on Tolstoïsm. *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 350
To a Persian (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* . . 352
To a Hindoo (1901). " " " " " . . 354
To the Editor of "Free Thought" (Bulgaria) (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 355
On Reason, Faith, and Prayer (1901). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 357
To a Member of a Russian School Board (1900). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 372
On the Religious Education of the Young (1900). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 373
To a Friend on Suicide (1898). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 377
To the Russian Ministers of the Interior and Justice (1896). *Translated by V. T. and A. C. F.* 379

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WHAT IS ART?

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE fundamental thought expressed in this book leads inevitably to conclusions so new, so unexpected, and so contrary to what is usually maintained in literary and artistic circles, that although it is clearly and emphatically expressed (and this I hope has not been lost in translation), most readers who wish to possess themselves of it will have to read the work carefully, and to digest it slowly.

Especially the introductory Chapters II., III., IV., and V., need careful perusal by any who, having adopted one or other of the current theories on beauty and art, may find it difficult to abandon a preconceived view, and to clear their minds for a fair appreciation of what is new to them.

The first four chapters raise the problem, and tell us briefly what has been said by previous writers. Chapter III. gives (in highly condensed form) the substance of the teaching of some sixty philosophers on this subject, and since many of them were extremely confused, the chapter cannot, in the nature of things, be easy reading.

I should like to remark, in passing, that though Tolstoï in this chapter (presumably for convenience of verification) refers chiefly to the compilations of Schasler, Kralik, and Knight, he has gone behind these authorities to the primary sources. To give a single instance: in the paragraph on Darwin, the foot-note refers us to Knight, but the remark that the origin of the art of music may be traced back to the call of the males to the females in the animal world will be found in Darwin, but will not be found in Knight.

In Chapter V. we come to Tolstoï's definition of art,

which definition should be kept well in mind while reading the rest of the book.

No doubt most of those to whom it is an end in itself, who live by it, or make it their chief occupation, will read this book (or leave it unread) and go on in their former way, much as Pharaoh, of old, hardened his heart, and did not sympathize with what Moses had to say on the labor question. But for those of us who have felt that art is too valuable a matter to be lost out of our lives, and who, in their quest for social justice, have met the reproach that they were sacrificing the pleasures and advantages of art, this book is of inestimable value, in that it solves a perplexed question of far-reaching importance to practical life.

To this class of readers neither the masterly elucidation of the former theories contained in the opening chapters, nor the explanation of how it has come about that such great importance is attached to the activity we call art (Chapters VI. and VII.), nor the explanation and illustrations of the perversion that art has undergone, nor even the elucidation of the terrible evils this perversion is producing (XVII.), will equal in significance the remaining chapters of the book. These show us what to look for in art, how to distinguish it from counterfeits (XV., XVI., and XVIII.), treat of the true art of the future (XIX.), and explain how science and art are linked together in man's life, are directed by his perception of the meaning of life, and inevitably react on all he thinks and feels.

THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

THIS book of mine, "What is Art?" appears now for the first time in its true form. More than one edition has already been issued in Russia, but in each case it has been so mutilated by the "Censor," that I request all who are interested in my views on art only to judge of them by the work in its present shape. The causes which led to the publication of the book — with my name attached to it — in a mutilated form were the following: In accordance with a decision I arrived at long ago, — not to submit my writings to the "Censorship" (which I consider to be an immoral and irrational institution), but to print them only in the shape in which they were written, — I intended not to attempt to print this work in Russia. However, my good acquaintance, Professor Grote, editor of a Moscow psychological magazine, having heard of the contents of my work, asked me to print it in his magazine, and promised me that he would get the book through the "Censor's" office unmutilated if I would but agree to a few very unimportant alterations, merely toning down certain expressions. I was weak enough to agree to this, and it has resulted in a book appearing under my name, from which not only have some essential thoughts been excluded, but into which the thoughts of other men — even thoughts utterly opposed to my own convictions — have been introduced.

The thing occurred in this way. First, Grote softened my expressions, and in some cases weakened them. For instance, he replaced the words: *always* by *sometimes*, *all* by *some*, *Church* religion by *Roman Catholic* religion, "*Mother of God*" by *Madonna*, *patriotism* by *pseudo-patriotism*, *palaces* by *palatii*,[1] etc., and I did not consider

[1] Tolstoï's remarks on Church religion were re-worded so as to seem to relate only to the Western Church, and his disapproval of luxurious life was made to apply, not, say, to Queen Victoria or Nicholas II., but to the Cæsars or the Pharaohs. —Tr.

it necessary to protest. But when the book was already in type, the Censor required that whole sentences should be altered, and that instead of what I said about the evil of landed property, a remark should be substituted on the evils of a landless proletariate.[1] I agreed to this also, and to some further alterations. It seemed not worth while to upset the whole affair for the sake of one sentence, and when one alteration had been agreed to it seemed not worth while to protest against a second and a third. So, little by little, expressions crept into the book which altered the sense and attributed things to me that I could not have wished to say. So that by the time the book was printed it had been deprived of some part of its integrity and sincerity. But there was consolation in the thought that the book, even in this form, if it contains something that is good, would be of use to Russian readers whom it would otherwise not have reached. Things, however, turned out otherwise. *Nous comptions sans notre hôte.* After the legal term of four days had already elapsed, the book was seized, and, on instructions received from Petersburg, it was handed over to the "Spiritual Censor." Then Grote declined all further participation in the affair, and the "Spiritual Censor" proceeded to do what he would with the book. The "Spiritual Censorship" is one of the most ignorant, venal, stupid, and despotic institutions in Russia. Books which disagree in any way with the recognized state religion of Russia, if once it gets hold of them, are almost always totally suppressed and burnt; which is what happened to all my religious works when attempts were made to print them in Russia. Probably a similar fate would have overtaken this work also, had not the editors

[1] The Russian peasant is usually a member of a village commune, and has therefore a right to a share in the land belonging to the village. Tolstoĭ disapproves of the order of society which allows less land for the support of a village full of people than is sometimes owned by a single landed proprietor. The "Censor" will not allow disapproval of this state of things to be expressed, but is prepared to admit that the laws and customs, say, of England — where a yet more extreme form of landed property exists, and the men who actually labor on the land usually possess none of it — deserve criticism. — TR.

of the magazine employed all means to save it. The result of their efforts was that the "Spiritual Censor," a priest who probably understands art and is interested in art as much as I understand or am interested in church services, but who gets a good salary for destroying whatever is likely to displease his superiors, struck out all that seemed to him to endanger his position, and substituted his thoughts for mine wherever he considered it necessary to do so. For instance, where I speak of Christ going to the Cross for the sake of the truth He professed, the "Censor" substituted a statement that Christ died for mankind, *i.e.* he attributed to me an assertion of the dogma of the Redemption, which I consider to be one of the most untrue and harmful of Church dogmas. After correcting the book in this way, the "Spiritual Censor" allowed it to be printed.

To protest in Russia is impossible—no newspaper would publish such a protest; and to withdraw my book from the magazine, and place the editor in an awkward position with the public, was also not possible.

So the matter has remained. A book has appeared under my name containing thoughts attributed to me which are not mine.

I was persuaded to give my article to a Russian magazine in order that my thoughts, which may be useful, should become the possession of Russian readers; and the result has been that my name is affixed to a work from which it might be assumed that I quite arbitrarily assert things contrary to the general opinion, without adducing my reasons; that I only consider false patriotism bad, but patriotism in general a very good feeling; that I merely deny the absurdities of the Roman Catholic Church and disbelieve in the Madonna, but that I believe in the Orthodox Eastern faith and in the "Mother of God"; that I consider all the writings collected in the Bible to be holy books, and see the chief importance of Christ's life in the Redemption of mankind by His death.

I have narrated all this in such detail because it strikingly illustrates the indubitable truth that all compromise

with institutions of which your conscience disapproves, — compromises which are usually made for the sake of the general good, — instead of producing the good you expected, inevitably lead you, not only to acknowledge the institution you disapprove of, but also to participate in the evil that institution produces.

I am glad to be able by this statement at least to do something to correct the error into which I was led by my compromise.

I have also to mention that besides reinstating the parts excluded by the Censor from the Russian editions, other corrections and additions of importance have been made in this edition.

29th March, 1898.

WHAT IS ART?

CHAPTER I

TAKE up any one of our ordinary newspapers, and you will find a part devoted to the theater and music. In almost every number you will find a description of some art exhibition, or of some particular picture, and you will always find reviews of new works of art that have appeared, of volumes of poems, of short stories, or of novels.

Promptly, and in detail, as soon as it has occurred, an account is published of how such and such an actress or actor played this or that rôle in such and such a drama, comedy, or opera ; and of the merits of the performance, as well as of the contents of the new drama, comedy, or opera, with its defects and merits. With as much care and detail, or even more, we are told how such and such an artist has sung a certain piece, or has played it on the piano or violin, and what were the merits and defects of the piece and of the performance. In every large town there is sure to be at least one, if not more than one, exhibition of new pictures, the merits and defects of which are discussed in the utmost detail by critics and connoisseurs.

New novels and poems, in separate volumes or in the magazines, appear almost every day, and the newspapers consider it their duty to give their readers detailed accounts of these artistic productions.

For the support of art in Russia (where for the education of the people only a hundredth part is spent of what would be required to give every one the opportunity of instruction) the government grants millions of roubles in subsidies to academies, conservatoires, and theaters. In

France twenty million francs are assigned for art, and similar grants are made in Germany and England.

In every large town enormous buildings are erected for museums, academies, conservatoires, dramatic schools, and for performances and concerts. Hundreds of thousands of workmen — carpenters, masons, painters, joiners, paperhangers, tailors, hairdressers, jewelers, molders, type-setters — spend their whole lives in hard labor to satisfy the demands of art, so that hardly any other department of human activity, except the military, consumes so much energy as this.

Not only is enormous labor spent on this activity, but in it, as in war, the very lives of men are sacrificed. Hundreds of thousands of people devote their lives from childhood to learning to twirl their legs rapidly (dancers), or to touch notes and strings very rapidly (musicians), or to draw with paint and represent what they see (artists), or to turn every phrase inside out and find a rhyme to every word. And these people, often very kind and clever, and capable of all sorts of useful labor, grow savage over their specialized and stupefying occupations, and become one-sided and self-complacent specialists, dull to all the serious phenomena of life, and skilful only at rapidly twisting their legs, their tongues, or their fingers.

But even this stunting of human life is not the worst. I remember being once at the rehearsal of one of the most ordinary of the new operas which are produced at all the opera houses of Europe and America.

I arrived when the first act had already commenced. To reach the auditorium I had to pass through the stage entrance. By dark entrances and passages, I was led through the vaults of an enormous building, past immense machines for changing the scenery and for illuminating; and there in the gloom and dust I saw workmen busily engaged. One of these men, pale, haggard, in a dirty blouse, with dirty, work-worn hands and cramped fingers, evidently tired and out of humor, went past me, angrily scolding another man. Ascending by a dark stair, I came out on the boards behind the scenes. Amid

various poles and rings and scattered scenery, decorations and curtains, stood and moved dozens, if not hundreds, of painted and dressed-up men, in costumes fitting tight to their thighs and calves, and also women, as usual, as nearly nude as might be. These were all singers, or members of the chorus, or ballet-dancers, awaiting their turns. My guide led me across the stage and, by means of a bridge of boards across the orchestra (in which perhaps a hundred musicians of all kinds, from kettledrum to flute and harp, were seated), to the dark pit-stalls.

On an elevation, between two lamps with reflectors, and in an arm-chair placed before a music-stand, sat the director of the musical part, *bâton* in hand, managing the orchestra and singers, and, in general, the production of the whole opera.

The performance had already commenced, and on the stage a procession of Indians who had brought home a bride was being presented. Besides men and women in costume, two other men in ordinary clothes bustled and ran about on the stage; one was the director of the dramatic part, and the other, who stepped about in soft shoes and ran from place to place with unusual agility, was the dancing-master, whose salary per month exceeded what ten laborers earn in a year.

These three directors arranged the singing, the orchestra, and the procession. The procession, as usual, was enacted by couples, with tinfoil halberds on their shoulders. They all came from one place, and walked round and round again, and then stopped. The procession took a long time to arrange: first the Indians with halberds came on too late; then too soon; then at the right time, but crowded together at the exit; then they did not crowd, but arranged themselves badly at the sides of the stage; and each time the whole performance was stopped and recommenced from the beginning. The procession was introduced by a recitative, delivered by a man dressed up like some variety of Turk, who, opening his mouth in a curious way, sang, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." He sings and waves his arm (which is of course bare) from under his mantle. The procession com-

mences, but here the French horn, in the accompaniment of the recitative, does something wrong; and the director, with a shudder as if some catastrophe had occurred, raps with his stick on the stand. All is stopped, and the director, turning to the orchestra, attacks the French horn, scolding him in the rudest terms, as cabmen abuse each other, for taking the wrong note. And again the whole thing recommences. The Indians with their halberds again come on, treading softly in their extraordinary boots; again the singer sings, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." But here the pairs get too close together. More raps with the stick, more scolding, and a recommencement. Again, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," again the same gesticulation with the bare arm from under the mantle, and again the couples, treading softly with halberds on their shoulders, some with sad and serious faces, some talking and smiling, arrange themselves in a circle and begin to sing. All seems to be going well, but again the stick raps, and the director, in a distressed and angry voice, begins to scold the men and women of the chorus. It appears that when singing they had omitted to raise their hands from time to time in sign of animation. "Are you all dead, or what? Cows that you are! Are you corpses, that you can't move?" Again they recommence, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide," and again, with sorrowful faces, the chorus-women sing, first one and then another of them raising their hands. But two chorus-girls speak to each other, — again a more vehement rapping with the stick. "Have you come here to talk? Can't you gossip at home? You there in red breeches, come nearer. Look toward me! Recommence!" Again, "Home I bring the bri-i-ide." And so it goes on for one, two, three hours. The whole of such a rehearsal lasts six hours on end. Raps with the stick, repetitions, placings, corrections of the singers, of the orchestra, of the procession, of the dancers, — all seasoned with angry scolding. I heard the words, "asses," "fools," "idiots," "swine," addressed to the musicians and singers at least forty times in the course of one hour. And the unhappy individual to whom the

abuse is addressed, — flautist, horn-blower, or singer, — physically and mentally demoralized, does not reply, and does what is demanded of him. Twenty times is repeated the one phrase, " Home I bring the bri-i-ide," and twenty times the striding about in yellow shoes with a halberd over the shoulder. The conductor knows that these people are so demoralized that they are no longer fit for anything but to blow trumpets and walk about with halberds and in yellow shoes, and that they are also accustomed to dainty, easy living, so that they will put up with anything rather than lose their luxurious life. He therefore gives free vent to his churlishness, especially as he has seen the same thing done in Paris and Vienna, and knows that this is the way the best conductors behave, and that it is a musical tradition of great artists to be so carried away by the great business of their art that they cannot pause to consider the feelings of other artists.

It would be difficult to find a more repulsive sight. I have seen one workman abuse another for not supporting the weight piled upon him when goods were being unloaded, or, at hay-stacking, the village elder scold a peasant for not making the rick right, and the man submitted in silence. And, however unpleasant it was to witness the scene, the unpleasantness was lessened by the consciousness that the business in hand was needful and important, and that the fault for which the head man scolded the laborer was one which might spoil a needful undertaking.

But what was being done here? For what, and for whom? Very likely the conductor was tired out, like the workman I passed in the vaults; it was even evident that he was; but who made him tire himself? And for what was he tiring himself? The opera he was rehearsing was one of the most ordinary of operas for people who are accustomed to them, but also one of the most gigantic absurdities that could possibly be devised. An Indian king wants to marry; they bring him a bride; he disguises himself as a minstrel; the bride falls in love with the minstrel and is in de-

spair, but afterwards discovers that the minstrel is the king, and every one is highly delighted.

That there never were, or could be, such Indians, and that they were not only unlike Indians, but that what they were doing was unlike anything on earth except other operas, was beyond all manner of doubt; that people do not converse in such a way as recitative, and do not place themselves at fixed distances, in a quartet, waving their arms to express their emotions; that nowhere, except in theaters, do people walk about in such a manner, in pairs, with tinfoil halberds and in slippers; that no one ever gets angry in such a way, or is affected in such a way, or laughs in such a way, or cries in such a way; and that no one on earth can be moved by such performances; all this is beyond the possibility of doubt.

Instinctively the question presents itself: For whom is this being done? Whom *can* it please? If there are, occasionally, good melodies in the opera, to which it is pleasant to listen, they could have been sung simply, without these stupid costumes and all the processions and recitatives and hand-wavings.

The ballet, in which half-naked women make voluptuous movements, twisting themselves into various sensual wreathings, is simply a lewd performance.

So one is quite at a loss as to whom these things are done for. The man of culture is heartily sick of them, while to a real working-man they are utterly incomprehensible. If any one can be pleased by these things (which is doubtful), it can only be some young footman or depraved artisan, who has contracted the spirit of the upper classes but is not yet satiated with their amusements, and wishes to show his breeding.

And all this nasty folly is prepared, not simply, nor with kindly merriment, but with anger and brutal cruelty.

It is said that it is all done for the sake of art, and that art is a very important thing. But is it true that art is so important that such sacrifices should be made for its sake? This question is especially urgent, be-

cause art, for the sake of which the labor of millions, the lives of men, and, above all, love between man and man, are being sacrificed, — this very art is becoming something more and more vague and uncertain to human perception.

Criticism, in which the lovers of art used to find support for their opinions, has latterly become so self-contradictory, that, if we exclude from the domain of art all that to which the critics of various schools themselves deny the title, there is scarcely any art left.

The artists of various sects, like the theologians of the various sects, mutually exclude and destroy themselves. Listen to the artists of the schools of our times, and you will find, in all branches, each set of artists disowning others. In poetry the old romanticists deny the parnassiens and the decadents; the parnassiens disown the romanticists and the decadents; the decadents disown all their predecessors and the symbolists; the symbolists disown all their predecessors and *les mages;* and *les mages* disown all, all their predecessors. Among novelists we have naturalists, psychologists, and "nature-ists," all rejecting each other. And it is the same in dramatic art, in painting, and in music. So that art, which demands such tremendous labor-sacrifices from the people, which stunts human lives and transgresses against human love, is not only *not* a thing clearly and firmly defined, but is understood in such contradictory ways by its own devotees that it is difficult to say what is meant by art, and especially what is good, useful art, — art for the sake of which we might condone such sacrifices as are being offered at its shrine.

CHAPTER II

For the production of every ballet, circus, opera, operetta, exhibition, picture, concert, or printed book, the intense and unwilling labor of thousands and thousands of people is needed at what is often harmful and

humiliating work. It were well if artists made all they require for themselves, but, as it is, they all need the help of workmen, not only to produce art, but also for their own usually luxurious maintenance. And, one way or other, they get it; either through payments from rich people, or through subsidies given by government (in Russia, for instance, in grants of millions of roubles to theaters, conservatoires, and academies). This money is collected from the people, some of whom have to sell their only cow to pay the tax, and who never get those æsthetic pleasures which art gives.

It was all very well for a Greek or Roman artist, or even for a Russian artist of the first half of our century (when there were still slaves, and it was considered right that there should be), with a quiet mind to make people serve him and his art; but in our day, when in all men there is at least some dim perception of the equal rights of all, it is impossible to constrain people to labor unwillingly for art, without first deciding the question whether it is true that art is so good and so important an affair as to redeem this evil.

If not, we have the terrible probability to consider, that while fearful sacrifices of the labor and lives of men, and of morality itself, are being made to art, that same art may be not only useless but even harmful.

And therefore it is necessary for a society in which works of art arise and are supported, to find out whether all that professes to be art is really art; whether (as is presupposed in our society) all that which is art is good; and whether it is important and worth those sacrifices which it necessitates. It is still more necessary for every conscientious artist to know this, that he may be sure that all he does has a valid meaning; that it is not merely an infatuation of the small circle of people among whom he lives which excites in him the false assurance that he is doing a good work; and that what he takes from others for the support of his often very luxurious life, will be compensated for by those productions at which he works. And that is why answers to the above questions are especially important in our time.

What is this art, which is considered so important and necessary for humanity that for its sake these sacrifices of labor, of human life, and even of goodness may be made?

"What is art? What a question! Art is architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and poetry in all its forms," usually replies the ordinary man, the art amateur, or even the artist himself, imagining the matter about which he is talking to be perfectly clear, and uniformly understood by everybody. But in architecture, one inquires further, are there not simple buildings which are not objects of art, and buildings with artistic pretensions which are unsuccessful and ugly and therefore cannot be considered as works of art? Wherein lies the characteristic sign of a work of art?

It is the same in sculpture, in music, and in poetry. Art, in all its forms, is bounded on one side by the practically useful, and on the other by unsuccessful attempts at art. How is art to be marked off from each of these? The ordinary educated man of our circle, and even the artist who has not occupied himself especially with æsthetics, will not hesitate at this question either. He thinks the solution has been found long ago, and is well known to every one.

"Art is such activity as produces beauty," says such a man.

If art consists in that, then is a ballet or an operetta art? you inquire.

"Yes," says the ordinary man, though with some hesitation, "a good ballet or a graceful operetta is also art, in so far as it manifests beauty."

But without even asking the ordinary man what differentiates the "good" ballet and the "graceful" operetta from their opposites (a question he would have much difficulty in answering), if you ask him whether the activity of costumiers and hairdressers, who ornament the figures and faces of the women for the ballet and the operetta, is art; or the activity of Worth, the dressmaker; of scent-makers and men cooks, — then he will, in most cases, deny that their activity belongs to the sphere of art. But in this the ordinary man makes a

mistake, just because he is an ordinary man and not a specialist, and because he has not occupied himself with æsthetic questions. Had he looked into these matters, he would have seen in the great Renan's book, "Marc Aurele," a dissertation showing that the tailor's work is art, and that those who do not see in the adornment of woman an affair of the highest art are very small-minded and dull. "*C'est le grand art*," says Renan. Moreover, he would have known that in many æsthetic systems — for instance, in the æsthetics of the learned Professor Kralik, "Weltschönheit, Versuch einer allgemeinen Æsthetik, von Richard Kralik," and in "Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine," by Guyau — the arts of costume, of taste, and of touch are included.

"*Es Folgt nun ein Fünfblatt von Künsten, die der subjectiven Sinnlichkeit entkeimen*" (There results then a pentafoliate of arts, growing out of the subjective perceptions), says Kralik (p. 175). "*Sie sind die ästhetische Behandlung der fünf Sinne.*" (They are the æsthetic treatment of the five senses.)

These five arts are the following: —

Die Kunst des Geschmacksinns — The art of the sense of taste (p. 175).

Die Kunst des Geruchsinns — The art of the sense of smell (p. 177).

Die Kunst des Tastsinns — The art of the sense of touch (p. 180).

Die Kunst des Gehörsinns — The art of the sense of hearing (p. 182).

Die Kunst des Gesichtsinns — The art of the sense of sight (p. 184).

Of the first of these — *die Kunst des Geschmacksinns* — he says: "*Man hält zwar gewöhnlich nur zwei oder höchstens drei Sinne für würdig, den Stoff künstlerischer Behandlung abzugeben, aber ich glaube nur mit bedingtem Recht. Ich will kein allzugrosses Gewicht darauf legen, dass der gemeine Sprachgebrauch manch andere Künste, wie zum Beispiel die Kochkunst kennt.*" [1]

[1] Only two, or at most three, senses are generally held worthy to supply matter for artistic treatment, but I think this opinion is only con-

And further: "*Und es ist doch gewiss eine ästhetische Leistung, wenn es der Kochkunst gelingt aus einem thierischen Kadaver einen Gegenstand des Geschmacks in jedem Sinne zu machen. Der Grundsatz der Kunst des Geschmacksinns* (*die weiter ist als die sogenannte Kochkunst*) *ist also dieser: Es soll alles Geniessbare als Sinnbild einer Idee behandelt werden und in jedesmaligem Einklang zur auszudrückenden Idee.*"[1]

This author, like Renan, acknowledges a *Kostümkunst* (Art of Costume) (p. 200), etc.

Such is also the opinion of the French writer, Guyau, who is highly esteemed by some authors of our day. In his book, "Les Problèmes de l'Esthétique Contemporaine," he speaks seriously of touch, taste, and smell as giving, or being capable of giving, æsthetic impressions: "*Si la couleur manque au toucher, il nous fournit en revanche une notion que l'œil seul ne peut nous donner, et qui a une valeur esthétique considérable, celle du* doux, *du* soyeux, *du* poli. *Ce qui caractérise la beauté du velours, c'est sa douceur au toucher non moins que son brillant. Dans l'idée que nous nous faisons de la beauté d'une femme, le velouté de sa peau entre comme élément essentiel.*"

"*Chacun de nous probablement avec un peu d'attention se rappellera des jouissances du goût, qui ont été de véritables jouissances esthétiques.*"[2] And he recounts how a glass of milk drunk by him in the mountains gave him æsthetic enjoyment.

ditionally correct. I will not lay too much stress on the fact that our common speech recognizes many other arts, as, for instance, the art of cookery.

[1] And yet it is certainly an æsthetic achievement when the art of cooking succeeds in making of an animal's corpse an object in all respects tasteful. The principle of the Art of Taste (which goes beyond the so-called Art of Cookery) is therefore this: All that is eatable should be treated as the symbol of some Idea, and always in harmony with the Idea to be expressed.

[2] If the sense of touch lacks color, it gives us, on the other hand, a notion which the eye alone cannot afford, and one of considerable æsthetic value, namely, that of *softness, silkiness, polish.* The beauty of velvet is characterized not less by its softness to the touch than by its luster. In the idea we form of a woman's beauty, the softness of her skin enters as an essential element.

Each of us, probably, with a little attention, can recall pleasures of taste which have been real æsthetic pleasures.

So it turns out that the conception of art, as consisting in making beauty manifest, is not at all so simple as it seemed, especially now, when in this conception of beauty are included our sensations of touch and taste and smell, as they are by the latest æsthetic writers.

But the ordinary man either does not know, or does not wish to know, all this, and is firmly convinced that all questions about art may be simply and clearly solved by acknowledging beauty to be the subject-matter of art. To him it seems clear and comprehensible that art consists in manifesting beauty, and that a reference to beauty will serve to explain all questions about art.

But what is this beauty which forms the subject-matter of art? How is it defined? What is it?

As is always the case, the more cloudy and confused the conception conveyed by a word, with the more *aplomb* and self-assurance do people use that word, pretending that what is understood by it is so simple and clear that it is not worth while even to discuss what it actually means.

This is how matters of orthodox religion are usually dealt with, and this is how people now deal with the conception of beauty. It is taken for granted that what is meant by the word beauty is known and understood by every one. And yet not only is this not known, but, after whole mountains of books have been written on the subject by the most learned and profound thinkers during one hundred and fifty years (ever since Baumgarten founded æsthetics in the year 1750), the question, What is beauty? remains to this day quite unsolved, and in each new work on æsthetics it is answered in a new way. One of the last books I read on æsthetics is a not ill-written booklet by Julius Mithalter, called "Rätsel des Schönen" (The Enigma of the Beautiful). And that title precisely expresses the position of the question, What is beauty? After thousands of learned men have discussed it during one hundred and fifty years, the meaning of the word beauty remains an enigma still. The Germans answer the question in their manner, though in a hundred different ways. The physiologist-

æstheticians, especially the Englishmen, Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, and his school, answer it, each in his own way; the French eclectics, and the followers of Guyau and Taine, also each in his own way; and all these people know all the preceding solutions given by Baumgarten, and Kant, and Schelling, and Schiller, and Fichte, and Winckelmann, and Lessing, and Hegel, and Schopenhauer, and Hartmann, and Schasler, and Cousin, and Lévêque, and others.

What is this strange conception "beauty," which seems so simple to those who talk without thinking, but in defining which all the philosophers of various tendencies and different nationalities can come to no agreement during a century and a half? What is this conception of beauty, on which the dominant doctrine of art rests?

In Russian, by the word *krasota* (beauty) we mean only that which pleases the sight. And though latterly people have begun to speak of "an ugly deed," or of "beautiful music," it is not good Russian.

A Russian of the common folk, not knowing foreign languages, will not understand you if you tell him that a man who has given his last coat to another, or done anything similar, has acted "beautifully," that a man who has cheated another has done an "ugly" action, or that a song is "beautiful."

In Russian a deed may be kind and good, or unkind and bad. Music may be pleasant and good, or unpleasant and bad; but there can be no such thing as "beautiful" or "ugly" music.

Beautiful may relate to a man, a horse, a house, a view, or a movement. Of actions, thoughts, character, or music, if they please us, we may say that they are good, or, if they do not please us, that they are not good. But beautiful can be used only concerning that which pleases the sight. So that the word and conception "good" includes the conception of "beautiful," but the reverse is not the case; the conception "beauty" does not include the conception "good." If we say "good" of an article which we value for its appearance,

we thereby say that the article is beautiful; but if we say it is "beautiful," it does not at all mean that the article is a good one.

Such is the meaning ascribed by the Russian language, and therefore by the sense of the people, to the words and conceptions "good" and "beautiful."

In all the European languages, *i.e.* the languages of those nations among whom the doctrine has spread that beauty is the essential thing in art, the words "beau," "schön," "beautiful," "bello," etc., while keeping their meaning of beautiful in form, have come to also express "goodness," "kindness," *i.e.* have come to act as substitutes for the word "good."

So that it has become quite natural in those languages to use such expressions as "belle ame," "schöne Gedanken," of "beautiful deed." Those languages no longer have a suitable word wherewith expressly to indicate beauty of form, and have to use a combination of words such as "beau par la forme," "beautiful to look at," etc., to convey that idea.

Observation of the divergent meanings which the words "beauty" and "beautiful" have in Russian on the one hand, and in those European languages now permeated by this æsthetic theory on the other hand, shows us that the word "beauty" has, among the latter, acquired a special meaning, namely, that of "good."

What is remarkable, moreover, is that since we Russians have begun more and more to adopt the European view of art, the same evolution has begun to show itself in our language also, and some people speak and write quite confidently, and without causing surprise, of beautiful music and ugly actions, or even thoughts; whereas forty years ago, when I was young, the expressions "beautiful music" and "ugly actions" were not only unusual, but incomprehensible. Evidently this new meaning given to beauty by European thought begins to be assimilated by Russian society.

And what really is this meaning? What is this "beauty" as it is understood by the European peoples?

In order to answer this question, I must here quote

at least a small selection of those definitions of beauty most generally adopted in existing æsthetic systems. I especially beg the reader not to be overcome by dullness, but to read these extracts through, or, still better, to read some one of the erudite æsthetic authors. Not to mention the voluminous German æstheticians, a very good book for this purpose would be either the German book by Kralik, the English work by Knight, or the French one by Lévêque. It is necessary to read one of the learned æsthetic writers in order to form at first-hand a conception of the variety in opinion and the frightful obscurity which reigns in this region of speculation; not, in this important matter, trusting to another's report.

This, for instance, is what the German æsthetician Schasler says in the preface to his famous, voluminous, and detailed work on æsthetics: —

"Hardly in any sphere of philosophic science can we find such divergent methods of investigation and exposition, amounting even to self-contradiction, as in the sphere of æsthetics. On the one hand, we have elegant phraseology without any substance, characterized in great part by most one-sided superficiality; and on the other hand, accompanying undeniable profundity of investigation and richness of subject-matter, we get a revolting awkwardness of philosophic terminology, infolding the simplest thoughts in an apparel of abstract science, as though to render them worthy to enter the consecrated palace of the system; and finally, between these two methods of investigation and exposition there is a third, forming, as it were, the transition from one to the other, a method consisting of eclecticism, now flaunting an elegant phraseology, and now a pedantic erudition. .... A style of exposition that falls into none of these three defects but it is truly concrete, and, having important matter, expresses it in clear and popular philosophic language, can nowhere be found less frequently than in the domain of æsthetics." [1]

It is only necessary, for instance, to read Schasler's

[1] M. Schasler, "Kritische Geschichte der Æsthetik," 1872, vol. i., p. 13.

own book to convince oneself of the justice of this observation of his.

On the same subject the French writer Véron, in the preface to his very good work on æsthetics, says: "*Il n'y a pas de science, qui ait été plus que l'esthétique livrée aux rêveries des métaphysiciens. Depuis Platon jusqu' aux doctrines officielles de nos jours, on a fait de l'art je ne sais quel amalgame de fantaisies quintessenciées, et de mystères transcendantaux qui trouvent leur expression suprême dans la conception absolue du Beau idéal, prototype immuable et divin des choses réelles*" ("L'Esthétique," 1878, p. 5).[1]

If the reader will only be at the pains to peruse the following extracts, defining beauty, taken from the chief writers on æsthetics, he may convince himself that this censure is thoroughly deserved.

I shall not quote the definitions of beauty attributed to the ancients, — Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, etc., down to Plotinus, — because, in reality, the ancients had not that conception of beauty separated from goodness which forms the basis and aim of æsthetics in our time. By referring the judgments of the ancients on beauty to our conception of it, as is usually done in æsthetics, we give the words of the ancients a meaning which is not theirs.[2]

CHAPTER III

I BEGIN with the founder of æsthetics, Baumgarten (1714–1762).

According to Baumgarten,[3] the object of logical

[1] There is no science which, more than æsthetics, has been handed over to the reveries of the metaphysicians. From Plato down to the received doctrines of our day, people have made of art a strange amalgam of quintessential fancies and transcendental mysteries, which find their supreme expression in the conception of an absolute ideal Beauty, immutable and divine prototype of actual things.

[2] See on this matter Benard's admirable book, "L'Esthétique d'Aristote," also Walter's "Geschichte der Æsthetik in Altertum."

[3] Schasler, p. 361.

knowledge is Truth, the object of æsthetic (*i.e.* sensuous) knowledge is Beauty. Beauty is the Perfect (the Absolute) recognized through the senses; Truth is the Perfect perceived through reason; Goodness is the Perfect reached by moral will.

Beauty is defined by Baumgarten as a correspondence, *i.e.* an order of the parts in their mutual relations to each other and in their relation to the whole. The aim of beauty itself is to please and excite a desire, "*Wohlgefallen und Erregung eines Verlangens.*" (A position precisely the opposite of Kant's definition of the nature and sign of beauty.)

With reference to the manifestations of beauty, Baumgarten considers that the highest embodiment of beauty is seen by us in nature, and he therefore thinks that the highest aim of art is to copy nature. (This position also is directly contradicted by the conclusions of the latest æstheticians.)

Passing over the unimportant followers of Baumgarten, — Maier, Eschenburg, and Eberhard, — who only slightly modified the doctrine of their teacher by dividing the pleasant from the beautiful, I will quote the definitions given by writers who came immediately after Baumgarten, and defined beauty quite in another way. These writers were Sulzer, Mendelssohn, and Moritz. They, in contradiction to Baumgarten's main position, recognize as the aim of art, not beauty, but goodness. Thus Sulzer (1720–1777) says that only that can be considered beautiful which contains goodness. According to his theory, the aim of the whole life of humanity is welfare in social life. This is attained by the education of the moral feelings, to which end art should be subservient. Beauty is that which evokes and educates this feeling.

Beauty is understood almost in the same way by Mendelssohn (1729–1786). According to him, art is the carrying forward of the beautiful, obscurely recognized by feeling, till it becomes the true and good. The aim of art is moral perfection.[1]

[1] Schasler, p. 369.

For the æstheticians of this school, the ideal of beauty is a beautiful soul in a beautiful body. So that these æstheticians completely wipe out Baumgarten's division of the Perfect (the Absolute), into the three forms of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty; and Beauty is again united with the Good and the True.

But this conception is not only not maintained by the later æstheticians, but the æsthetic doctrine of Winckelmann arises, again in complete opposition. This divides the mission of art from the aim of goodness in the sharpest and most positive manner, makes external beauty the aim of art, and even limits it to visible beauty.

According to the celebrated work of Winckelmann (1717–1767), the law and aim of all art is beauty only, beauty quite separated from and independent of goodness. There are three kinds of beauty: (1) beauty of form, (2) beauty of idea, expressing itself in the position of the figure (in plastic art), (3) beauty of expression, attainable only when the two first conditions are present. This beauty of expression is the highest aim of art, and is attained in antique art; modern art should therefore aim at imitating ancient art.[1]

Art is similarly understood by Lessing, Herder, and afterwards by Goethe and by all the distinguished æstheticians of Germany till Kant, from whose day, again, a different conception of art commences.

Native æsthetic theories arose during this period in England, France, Italy, and Holland, and they, though not taken from the German, were equally cloudy and contradictory. And all these writers, just like the German æstheticians, founded their theories on a conception of the Beautiful, understanding beauty in the sense of a something existing absolutely, and more or less intermingled with Goodness or having one and the same root. In England, almost simultaneously with Baumgarten, even a little earlier, Shaftesbury, Hutcheson, Home, Burke, Hogarth, and others, wrote on art.

According to Shaftesbury (1670–1713), "That which is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable, what is

[1] Schasler, pp. 388–390.

harmonious and proportionable is true, and what is at once both beautiful and true is of consequence agreeable and good."[1] Beauty, he taught, is recognized by the mind only. God is fundamental beauty; beauty and goodness proceed from the same fount.

So that, although Shaftesbury regards beauty as being something separate from goodness, they again merge into something inseparable.

According to Hutcheson (1694–1747 — "Inquiry into the Original of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue"), the aim of art is beauty, the essence of which consists in evoking in us the perception of uniformity amid variety. In the recognition of what is art we are guided by "an internal sense." This internal sense may be in contradiction to the ethical one. So that, according to Hutcheson, beauty does not always correspond with goodness, but separates from it and is sometimes contrary to it.[2]

According to Home, Lord Kames (1696–1782), beauty is that which is pleasant. Therefore beauty is defined by taste alone. The standard of true taste is that the maximum of richness, fullness, strength, and variety of impression should be contained in the narrowest limits. That is the ideal of a perfect work of art.

According to Burke (1729–1797 — "Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful"), the sublime and beautiful, which are the aim of art, have their origin in the promptings of self-preservation and of society. These feelings, examined in their source, are means for the maintenance of the race through the individual. The first (self-preservation) is attained by nourishment, defense, and war; the second (society) by intercourse and propagation. Therefore self-defense, and war, which is bound up with it, is the source of the sublime; sociability, and the sex-instinct, which is bound up with it, is the source of beauty.[3]

[1] Knight, "Philosophy of the Beautiful," i., pp. 165, 166.
[2] Schasler, p. 289. Knight, pp. 168, 169.
[3] R. Kralik, "Weltschönheit, Versuch einer allgemeinen Æsthetik," pp. 304–306.

Such were the chief English definitions of art and beauty in the eighteenth century.

During that period, in France, the writers on art were Père André and Batteux, with Diderot, D'Alembert, and, to some extent, Voltaire, following later.

According to Père André ("Essai sur le Beau," 1741), there are three kinds of beauty, — divine beauty, natural beauty, and artificial beauty.[1]

According to Batteux (1713–1780), art consists in imitating the beauty of nature, its aim being enjoyment.[2] Such is also Diderot's definition of art.

The French writers, like the English, consider that it is taste that decides what is beautiful. And the laws of taste are not only not laid down, but it is granted that they cannot be settled. The same view was held by D'Alembert and Voltaire.[3]

According to the Italian æsthetician of that period, Pagano, art consists in uniting the beauties dispersed in nature. The capacity to perceive these beauties is taste, the capacity to bring them into one whole is artistic genius. Beauty commingles with goodness, so that beauty is goodness made visible, and goodness is inner beauty.[4]

According to the opinion of other Italians: Muratori (1672–1750), — "*Riflessioni sopra il buon gusto intorno le science e le arti*," — and especially Spaletti,[5] — "*Saggio sopra la bellezza*" (1765), — art amounts to an egotistical sensation, founded (as with Burke) on the desire for self-preservation and society.

Among Dutch writers, Hemsterhuis (1720–1790), who had an influence on the German æstheticians and on Goethe, is remarkable. According to him, beauty is that which gives most pleasure, and that gives most pleasure which gives us the greatest number of ideas in the shortest time. Enjoyment of the beautiful, because it gives the greatest quantity of perceptions in the shortest time, is the highest notion to which man can attain.[6]

[1] Knight, p. 101.
[2] Schasler, p. 316.
[3] Knight, pp. 102–104.
[4] R. Kralik, p. 124.
[5] Spaletti, Schasler, p. 328.
[6] Schasler, pp. 331–333.

Such were the æsthetic theories outside Germany during the last century. In Germany, after Winckelmann, there again arose a completely new æsthetic theory, that of Kant (1724–1804), which, more than all others, clears up what this conception of beauty, and consequently of art, really amounts to.

The æsthetic teaching of Kant is founded as follows: Man has a knowledge of nature outside him and of himself in nature. In nature, outside himself, he seeks for truth; in himself, he seeks for goodness. The first is an affair of pure reason, the other of practical reason (free will). Besides these two means of perception, there is yet the judging capacity (*Urteilskraft*), which forms judgments without reasonings and produces pleasure without desire (*Urtheil ohne Begriff und Vergnügen ohne Begehren*). This capacity is the basis of æsthetic feeling. Beauty, according to Kant, in its subjective meaning is that which, in general and necessarily, without reasonings and without practical advantage, pleases. In its objective meaning it is the form of a suitable object, in so far as that object is perceived without any conception of its utility.[1]

Beauty is defined in the same way by the followers of Kant, among whom was Schiller (1759–1805). According to Schiller, who wrote much on æsthetics, the aim of art is, as with Kant, beauty, the source of which is pleasure without practical advantage. So that art may be called a game, not in the sense of an unimportant occupation, but in the sense of a manifestation of the beauties of life itself without other aim than that of beauty.[2]

Besides Schiller, the most remarkable of Kant's followers in the sphere of æsthetics was Wilhelm Humboldt, who, though he added nothing to the definition of beauty, explained various forms of it, — the drama, music, the comic, etc.[3]

After Kant, besides the second-rate philosophers, the writers on æsthetics were Fichte, Schelling, Hegel,

[1] Schasler, pp. 525–528.
[2] Knight, pp. 61–63.
[3] Schasler, pp. 740–743.

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and their followers. Fichte (1762–1814) says that perception of the beautiful proceeds from this: the world — *i.e.* nature — has two sides: it is the sum of our limitations, and it is the sum of our free idealistic activity. In the first aspect the world is limited, in the second aspect it is free. In the first aspect every object is limited, distorted, compressed, confined — and we see deformity; in the second we perceive its inner completeness, vitality, regeneration — and we see beauty. So that the deformity or beauty of an object, according to Fichte, depends on the point of view of the observer. Beauty therefore exists, not in the world, but in the beautiful soul (*schöner Geist*). Art is the manifestation of this beautiful soul, and its aim is the education, not only of the mind — that is the business of the *savant*, not only of the heart — that is the affair of the moral preacher, but of the whole man. And so the characteristic of beauty lies, not in anything external, but in the presence of a beautiful soul in the artist.[1]

Following Fichte, and in the same direction, Friedrich Schlegel and Adam Müller also defined beauty. According to Schlegel (1772–1829), beauty in art is understood too incompletely, one-sidedly, and disconnectedly. Beauty exists, not only in art, but also in nature and in love; so that the truly beautiful is expressed by the union of art, nature, and love. Therefore, as inseparably one with æsthetic art, Schlegel acknowledges moral and philosophic art.[2]

According to Adam Müller (1779–1829), there are two kinds of beauty: the one, general beauty, which attracts people as the sun attracts the planet — this is found chiefly in antique art; and the other, individual beauty, which results from the observer himself becoming a sun, attracting beauty — this is the beauty of modern art. A world in which all contradictions are harmonized is the highest beauty. Every work of art is a reproduction of this universal harmony.[3] The highest art is the art of life.[4]

[1] Schasler, pp, 769–771.
[2] Schasler, pp. 786, 787.
[3] Kralik, p. 148.
[4] Kralik, p. 820.

Next after Fichte and his followers came a contemporary of his, the philosopher Schelling (1775–1854), who has had a great influence on the æsthetic conceptions of our times. According to Schelling's philosophy, art is the production or result of that conception of things by which the subject becomes its own object, or the object its own subject. Beauty is the perception of the infinite in the finite. And the chief characteristic of works of art is unconscious infinity. Art is the uniting of the subjective with the objective, of nature with reason, of the unconscious with the conscious, and therefore art is the highest means of knowledge. Beauty is the contemplation of things in themselves as they exist in the prototype (*In den Urbildern*). It is not the artist who by his knowledge or skill produces the beautiful, but the idea of beauty in him itself produces it.[1]

Of Schelling's followers the most noticeable was Solger (1780–1819 — "Vorlesungen über Æsthetik"). According to him, the idea of beauty is the fundamental idea of everything. In the world we see only distortions of the fundamental idea, but art, by imagination, may lift itself to the height of this idea. Art is therefore akin to creation.[2]

According to another follower of Schelling, Krause (1781–1832), true, positive beauty is the manifestation of the Idea in an individual form; art is the actualization of the beauty existing in the sphere of man's free spirit. The highest stage of art is the art of life, which directs its activity toward the adornment of life so that it may be a beautiful abode for a beautiful man.[3]

After Schelling and his followers came the new æsthetic doctrine of Hegel, which is held to this day, consciously by many, but by the majority unconsciously. This teaching is not only no clearer or better defined than the preceding ones, but is, if possible, even more cloudy and mystical.

[1] Schasler, pp. 828, 829, 834–841.
[2] Schasler, p. 891.
[3] Schasler, p. 917.

According to Hegel (1770–1831), God manifests himself in nature and in art in the form of beauty. God expresses himself in two ways: in the object and in the subject, in nature and in spirit. Beauty is the shining of the Idea through matter. Only the soul, and what pertains to it, is truly beautiful; and therefore the beauty of nature is only the reflection of the natural beauty of the spirit — the beautiful has only a spiritual content. But the spiritual must appear in sensuous form. The sensuous manifestation of spirit is only appearance (*schein*), and this appearance is the only reality of the beautiful. Art is thus the production of this appearance of the Idea, and is a means, together with religion and philosophy, of bringing to consciousness and of expressing the deepest problems of humanity and the highest truths of the spirit.

Truth and beauty, according to Hegel, are one and the same thing; the difference being only that truth is the Idea itself as it exists in itself, and is thinkable. The Idea, manifested externally, becomes to the apprehension not only true but beautiful. The beautiful is the manifestation of the Idea.[1]

Following Hegel came his many adherents, Weisse, Arnold Ruge, Rosenkrantz, Theodor Vischer, and others.

According to Weisse (1801–1867), art is the introduction (*Einbildung*) of the absolute spiritual reality of beauty into external, dead, indifferent matter, the perception of which latter, apart from the beauty brought into it, presents the negation of all existence in itself (*Negation alles Fürsichseins*).

In the idea of truth, Weisse explains, lies a contradiction between the subjective and the objective sides of knowledge, in that an individual *I* discerns the Universal. This contradiction can be removed by a conception that should unite into one the universal and the individual, which fall asunder in our conceptions of truth. Such a conception would be reconciled (*aufgehoben*) truth. Beauty is such a reconciled truth.[2]

[1] Schasler, pp. 946, 1085, 984, 985, 990.
[2] Schasler, pp. 966, 655, 956,

According to Ruge (1802–1880), a strict follower of Hegel, beauty is the Idea expressing itself. The spirit, contemplating itself, either finds itself expressed completely, and then that full expression of itself is beauty; or incompletely, and then it feels the need to alter this imperfect expression of itself, and becomes creative art.[1]

According to Vischer (1807–1887), beauty is the Idea in the form of a finite phenomenon. The Idea itself is not indivisible, but forms a system of ideas, which may be represented by ascending and descending lines. The higher the idea, the more beauty it contains; but even the lowest contains beauty, because it forms an essential link of the system. The highest form of the Idea is personality, and therefore the highest art is that which has for its subject-matter the highest personality.[2]

Such were the theories of the German æstheticians in the Hegelian direction, but they did not monopolize æsthetic dissertations. In Germany, side by side and simultaneously with the Hegelian theories, there appeared theories of beauty not only independent of Hegel's position (that beauty is the manifestation of the Idea), but directly contrary to this view, denying and ridiculing it. Such was the line taken by Herbart and, more particularly, by Schopenhauer.

According to Herbart (1776–1841), there is not, and cannot be, any such thing as beauty existing in itself. What does exist is only our opinion, and it is necessary to find the base of this opinion (*Ästhetisches Elementarurtheil*). Such bases are connected with our impressions. There are certain relations which we term beautiful; and art consists in finding these relations, which are simultaneous in painting, the plastic art, and architecture, successive and simultaneous in music, and purely successive in poetry. In contradiction to the former æstheticians, Herbart holds that objects are often beautiful which express nothing at all, as, for instance, the rainbow, which is beautiful for its lines and colors, and not for its mythological connection with Iris or Noah's rainbow.[3]

[1] Schasler, p. 1017.
[2] Schasler, pp. 1065, 1066.
[3] Schasler, pp. 1097–1100.

Another opponent of Hegel was Schopenhauer, who denied Hegel's whole system, his æsthetics included.

According to Schopenhauer (1788–1860), Will objectivizes itself in the world on various planes; and although the higher the plane on which it is objectivized the more beautiful it is, yet each plane has its own beauty. Renunciation of one's individuality and contemplation of one of these planes of manifestation of Will gives us a perception of beauty. All men, says Schopenhauer, possess the capacity to objectivize the Idea on different planes. The genius of the artist has this capacity in a higher degree, and therefore makes a higher beauty manifest.[1]

After these more eminent writers there followed, in Germany, less original and less influential ones, such as Hartmann, Kirkmann, Schnasse, and, to some extent, Helmholtz (as an æsthetician), Bergmann, Jungmann, and an innumerable host of others.

According to Hartmann (1842), beauty lies, not in the external world, nor in "the thing in itself," neither does it reside in the soul of man, but it lies in the "seeming" (*Schein*) produced by the artist. The thing in itself is not beautiful, but is transformed into beauty by the artist.[2]

According to Schnasse (1798–1875), there is no perfect beauty in the world. In nature there is only an approach toward it. Art gives what nature cannot give. In the energy of the free *ego*, conscious of harmony not found in nature, beauty is disclosed.[3]

Kirkmann wrote on experimental æsthetics. All aspects of history in his system are joined by pure chance. Thus, according to Kirkmann (1802–1884), there are six realms of history: The realm of Knowledge, of Wealth, of Morality, of Faith, of Politics, and of Beauty; and activity in the last-named realm is art.[4]

According to Helmholtz (1821), who wrote on beauty as it relates to music, beauty in musical productions is attained only by following unalterable laws. These laws

[1] Schasler, pp. 1124, 1107.
[2] Knight, pp. 81, 82.
[3] Knight, p. 83.
[4] Schasler, p. 1121.

are not known to the artist; so that beauty is manifested by the artist unconsciously, and cannot be subjected to analysis.[1]

According to Bergmann (1840) ("Ueber das Schöne," 1887), to define beauty objectively is impossible. Beauty is only perceived subjectively, and therefore the problem of æsthetics is to define what pleases whom.[2]

According to Jungmann (d. 1885), firstly, beauty is a suprasensible quality of things; secondly, beauty produces in us pleasure by merely being contemplated; and, thirdly, beauty is the foundation of love.[3]

The æsthetic theories of the chief representatives of France, England, and other nations in recent times have been the following: —

In France, during this period, the prominent writers on æsthetics were Cousin, Jouffroy, Pictet, Ravaisson, Lévêque.

Cousin (1792–1867) was an eclectic, and a follower of the German idealists. According to his theory, beauty always has a moral foundation. He disputes the doctrine that art is imitation and that the beautiful is what pleases. He affirms that beauty may be defined objectively, and that it essentially consists in variety in unity.[4]

After Cousin came Jouffroy (1796–1842), who was a pupil of Cousin's and also a follower of the German æstheticians. According to his definition, beauty is the expression of the invisible by those natural signs which manifest it. The visible world is the garment by means of which we see beauty.[5]

The Swiss writer Pictet repeated Hegel and Plato, supposing beauty to exist in the direct and free manifestation of the divine Idea revealing itself in sense forms.[6]

Lévêque was a follower of Schelling and Hegel. He holds that beauty is something invisible behind nature — a force or spirit revealing itself in ordered energy.[7]

Similar vague opinions about the nature of beauty

[1] Knight, pp. 85, 86.
[2] Knight, p. 88.
[3] Knight, p. 88.
[4] Knight, p. 112.
[5] Knight, p. 116.
[6] Knight, pp. 118, 119.
[7] Knight, pp. 123, 124.

were expressed by the French metaphysician Ravaisson, who considered beauty to be the ultimate aim and purpose of the world. "*La beauté la plus divine et principalement la plus parfaite contient le secret du monde.*"[1] And again, "*Le monde entier est l'œuvre d'une beauté absolue, qui n'est la cause des choses que par l'amour qu'elle met en elles.*"

I purposely abstain from translating these metaphysical expressions, because, however cloudy the Germans may be, the French, once they absorb the theories of the Germans and take to imitating them, far surpass them in uniting heterogeneous conceptions into one expression, and putting forward one meaning or another indiscriminately. For instance, the French philosopher Renouvier, when discussing beauty, says, "*Ne craignons pas de dire qu'une vérité qui ne serait pas belle, ne serait qu'un jeu logique de notre esprit et que la seule vérité solide et digne de ce nom c'est la beauté.*"[2]

Besides the æsthetic idealists who wrote and still write under the influence of German philosophy, the following recent writers have also influenced the comprehension of art and beauty in France: Taine, Guyau, Cherbuliez, Coster, and Véron.

According to Taine (1828–1893), beauty is the manifestation of the essential characteristic of any important idea more completely than it is expressed in reality.[3]

Guyau (1854–1888) taught that beauty is not something exterior to the object itself, — is not, as it were, a parasitic growth on it, — but is itself the very blossoming forth of that on which it appears. Art is the expression of reasonable and conscious life, evoking in us both the deepest consciousness of existence and the highest feelings and loftiest thoughts. Art lifts man from his personal life into the universal life by means, not only of participation in the same ideas and beliefs, but also by means of similarity in feeling.[4]

[1] "La Philosophie en France," p. 232.
[2] "Du Fondement de l'Induction."
[3] "Philosophie de l'Art," vol. i., 1893, p. 47.
[4] Knight, pp. 139–141.

According to Cherbuliez, art is an activity, (1) satisfying our innate love of forms (*apparences*), (2) endowing these forms with ideas, (3) affording pleasure alike to our senses, heart, and reason. Beauty is not inherent in objects, but is an act of our souls. Beauty is an illusion; there is no absolute beauty. But what we consider characteristic and harmonious appears beautiful to us.

Coster held that the ideas of the beautiful, the good, and the true are innate. These ideas illuminate our minds and are identical with God, who is Goodness, Truth, and Beauty. The idea of Beauty includes unity of essence, variety of constitutive elements, and order, which brings unity into the various manifestations of life.[1]

For the sake of completeness, I will further cite some of the very latest writings upon art.

"La Psychologie du Beau et de l'Art, par Mario Pilo" (1895), says that beauty is a product of our physical feelings. The aim of art is pleasure, but this pleasure (for some reason) he considers to be necessarily highly moral.

The "Essai sur l'Art Contemporain, par Fierens Gevaert" (1897), says that art rests on its connection with the past, and on the religious ideal of the present which the artist holds when giving to his work the form of his individuality.

Then again, Sar Peladan's "L'Art Idealiste et Mystique" (1894), says that beauty is one of the manifestations of God. "*Il n'y a pas d'autre Réalité que Dieu, il n'y a pas d'autre Vérité que Dieu, il n'y a pas d'autre Beauté que Dieu*" (p. 33). This book is very fantastic and very illiterate, but is characteristic in the positions it takes up, and noticeable on account of a certain success it is having with the younger generation in France.

All the æsthetics diffused in France up to the present time are similar in kind, but among them Véron's "L'Esthétique" (1878) forms an exception, being reasonable and clear. That work, though it does not give an

[1] Knight, p. 134.

exact definition of art, at least rids æsthetics of the cloudy conception of an absolute beauty.

According to Véron (1825–1889), art is the manifestation of emotion transmitted externally by a combination of lines, forms, colors, or by a succession of movements, sounds, or words subjected to certain rhythms.[1]

In England, during this period, the writers on æsthetics define beauty more and more frequently, not by its own qualities, but by taste; and the discussion about beauty is superseded by a discussion on taste.

After Reid (1704–1796), who acknowledged beauty as being entirely dependent on the spectator, Alison, in his "Essay on the Nature and Principles of Taste" (1790), proved the same thing. From another side this was also asserted by Erasmus Darwin (1731–1802), the grandfather of the celebrated Charles Darwin.

He says that we consider beautiful that which is connected in our conception with what we love. Richard Knight's work, "An Analytical Inquiry into the Principles of Taste," also tends in the same direction.

Most of the English theories of æsthetics are on the same lines. The prominent writers on æsthetics in England during the present century have been Charles Darwin (to some extent), Herbert Spencer, Grant Allen, Ker, and Knight.

According to Charles Darwin (1809–1882 — "Descent of Man," 1871), beauty is a feeling natural not only to man, but also to animals, and consequently to the ancestors of man. Birds adorn their nests and esteem beauty in their mates. Beauty has an influence on marriages. Beauty includes a variety of diverse conceptions. The origin of the art of music is the call of the males to the females.[2]

According to Herbert Spencer (b. 1820), the origin of art is play, a thought previously expressed by Schiller. In the lower animals all the energy of life is expended in life-maintenance and race-maintenance; in man, however, there remains, after these needs are satisfied, some superfluous strength. This excess is used in play,

[1] "L'Esthétique," p. 106. [2] Knight, p. 238.

which passes over into art. Play is an imitation of real activity; so is art. The sources of æsthetic pleasure are threefold: (1) That "which exercises the faculties affected in the most complete ways, with the fewest drawbacks from exercise," (2) "the difference of a stimulus in large amount, which awakens a glow of agreeable feeling," (3) the partial revival of the same, with special combinations.[1]

In Todhunter's "Theory of the Beautiful" (1872), beauty is infinite loveliness, which we apprehend both by reason and by the enthusiasm of love. The recognition of beauty as being such depends on taste; there can be no criterion for it. The only approach to a definition is found in culture. (What culture is, is not defined.) Intrinsically, art — that which affects us through lines, colors, sounds, or words — is not the product of blind forces, but of reasonable ones, working, with mutual helpfulness toward a reasonable aim. Beauty is the reconciliation of contradictions.[2]

Grant Allen is a follower of Spencer, and in his "Physiological Æsthetics" (1877) he says that beauty has a physical origin. Æsthetic pleasures come from the contemplation of the beautiful, but the conception of beauty is obtained by a physiological process. The origin of art is play; when there is a superfluity of physical strength man gives himself to play; when there is a superfluity of receptive power man gives himself to art. The beautiful is that which affords the maximum of stimulation with the minimum of waste. Differences in the estimation of beauty proceed from taste. Taste can be educated. We must have faith in the judgments "of the finest-nurtured and most discriminative" men. These people form the taste of the next generation.[3]

According to Ker's "Essay on the Philosophy of Art" (1883), beauty enables us to make part of the objective world intelligible to ourselves without being troubled by reference to other parts of it, as is inevitable for science. So that art destroys the opposition between the one and

[1] Knight, pp. 239, 240. [2] Knight, pp. 240–243.
[3] Knight, pp. 250–252.

the many, between the law and its manifestation, between the subject and its object, by uniting them. Art is the revelation and vindication of freedom, because it is free from the darkness and incomprehensibility of finite things.[1]

According to Knight's "Philosophy of the Beautiful," Part II. (1893), beauty is (as with Schelling) the union of object and subject, the drawing forth from nature of that which is cognate to man, and the recognition in oneself of that which is common to all nature.

The opinions on beauty and on art here mentioned are far from exhausting what has been written on the subject. And every day fresh writers on æsthetics arise, in whose disquisitions appear the same enchanted confusion and contradictoriness in defining beauty. Some, by inertia, continue the mystical æsthetics of Baumgarten and Hegel with sundry variations; others transfer the question to the region of subjectivity, and seek for the foundation of the beautiful in questions of taste; others — the æstheticians of the very latest formation — seek the origin of beauty in the laws of physiology; and finally, others again investigate the question quite independently of the conception of beauty. Thus Sully, in his "Sensation and Intuition: Studies in Psychology and Æsthetics" (1874), dismisses the conception of beauty altogether, art, by his definition, being the production of some permanent object or passing action fitted to supply active enjoyment to the producer, and a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners, quite apart from any personal advantage derived from it.[2]

CHAPTER IV

To what do these definitions of beauty amount? Not reckoning the thoroughly inaccurate definitions of beauty which fail to cover the conception of art, and which suppose beauty to consist either in utility, or in adjustment to a purpose, or in symmetry, or in order, or in propor-

[1] Knight, pp. 258, 259. [2] Knight, p. 243.

tion, or in smoothness, or in harmony of the parts, or in unity amid variety, or in various combinations of these — not reckoning these unsatisfactory attempts at objective definition, all the æsthetic definitions of beauty lead to two fundamental conceptions. The first is that beauty is something having an independent existence (existing in itself), that it is one of the manifestations of the absolutely Perfect, of the Idea, of the Spirit, of Will, or of God; the other is that beauty is a kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its object.

The first of these definitions was accepted by Fichte, Schelling, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and the philosophizing Frenchmen, Cousin, Jouffroy, Ravaisson, and others, not to enumerate the second-rate æsthetic philosophers. And this same objective-mystical definition of beauty is held by a majority of the educated people of our day. It is a conception very widely spread, especially among the elder generation.

The second view, that beauty is a certain kind of pleasure received by us, not having personal advantage for its aim, finds favor chiefly among the English æsthetic writers, and is shared by the other part of our society, principally by the younger generation.

So there are (and it could not be otherwise) only two definitions of beauty: the one objective, mystical, merging this conception into that of the highest perfection, God — a fantastic definition, founded on nothing; the other, on the contrary, a very simple and intelligible subjective one, which considers beauty to be that which pleases (I do not add to the word "pleases" the words "without the aim of advantage," because "pleases" naturally presupposes the absence of the idea of profit).

On the one hand, beauty is viewed as something mystical and very elevated, but unfortunately at the same time very indefinite, and consequently embracing philosophy, religion, and life itself (as in the theories of Schelling and Hegel, and their German and French followers); or, on the other hand (as necessarily follows from the definition of Kant and his adherents),

beauty is simply a certain kind of disinterested pleasure received by us. And this conception of beauty, although it seems very clear is, unfortunately, again inexact; for it widens out on the other side, *i.e.* it includes the pleasure derived from drink, from food, from touching a delicate skin, etc., as is acknowledged by Guyau, Kralik, and others.

It is true that, following the development of the æsthetic doctrines on beauty, we may notice that, though at first (in the times when the foundations of the science of æsthetics were being laid) the metaphysical definition of beauty prevailed, yet the nearer we get to our own times the more does an experimental definition (recently assuming a physiological form) come to the front, so that at last we even meet with such æstheticians as Véron and Sully, who try to escape entirely from the conception of beauty. But such æstheticians have very little success, and with the majority of the public, as well as of artists and the learned, a conception of beauty is firmly held which agrees with the definitions contained in most of the æsthetic treatises, *i.e.* which regards beauty either as something mystical or metaphysical, or as a special kind of enjoyment.

What, then, is this conception of beauty, so stubbornly held to by people of our circle and day as furnishing a definition of art?

In the subjective aspect, we call beauty that which supplies us with a particular kind of pleasure.

In the objective aspect, we call beauty something absolutely perfect, and we acknowledge it to be so only because we receive, from the manifestation of this absolute perfection, a certain kind of pleasure; so that this objective definition is nothing but the subjective conception differently expressed. In reality both conceptions of beauty amount to one and the same thing; namely, the reception by us of a certain kind of pleasure; *i.e.* we call "beauty" that which pleases us without evoking in us desire.

Such being the position of affairs, it would seem only natural that the science of art should decline to content

itself with a definition of art based on beauty (*i.e.* on that which pleases), and seek a general definition, which should apply to all artistic productions, and by reference to which we might decide whether a certain article belonged to the realm of art or not. But no such definition is supplied, as the reader may see from those summaries of the æsthetic theories which I have given, and as he may discover even more clearly from the original æsthetic works, if he will be at the pains to read them. All attempts to define absolute beauty in itself — whether as an imitation of nature, or as suitability to its object, or as a correspondence of parts, or as symmetry, or as harmony, or as unity in variety, etc. — either define nothing at all, or define only some traits of some artistic productions, and are far from including all that everybody has always held, and still holds, to be art.

There is no objective definition of beauty. The existing definitions (both the metaphysical and the experimental) amount only to one and the same subjective definition, which (strange as it seems to say so) is, that art is that which makes beauty manifest, and beauty is that which pleases (without exciting desire). Many æstheticians have felt the insufficiency and instability of such a definition, and, in order to give it a firm basis, have asked themselves why a thing pleases. And they have converted the discussion on beauty into a question concerning taste, as did Hutcheson, Voltaire, Diderot, and others. But all attempts to define what taste is must lead to nothing, as the reader may see both from the history of æsthetics and experimentally. There is and can be no explanation of why one thing pleases one man and displeases another, or *vice versa*. So that the whole existing science of æsthetics fails to do what we might expect from it, being a mental activity calling itself a science; namely, it does not define the qualities and laws of art, or of the beautiful (if that be the content of art), or the nature of taste (if taste decides the question of art and its merit), and then, on the basis of such definitions, acknowledge as art those productions

which correspond to these laws, and reject those which do not come under them. But this science of æsthetics consists in first acknowledging a certain set of productions to be art (because they please us), and then framing such a theory of art that all those productions which please a certain circle of people should fit into it. There exists an art canon, according to which certain productions favored by our circle are acknowledged as being art, — Phidias, Sophocles, Homer, Titian, Raphael, Bach, Beethoven, Dante, Shakespear, Goethe, and others, — and the æsthetic laws must be such as to embrace all these productions. In æsthetic literature you will incessantly meet with opinions on the merit and importance of art, founded not on any certain laws by which this or that is held to be good or bad, but merely on the consideration whether this art tallies with the art canon we have drawn up.

The other day I was reading a far from ill-written book by Folgeldt. Discussing the demand for morality in works of art, the author plainly says that we must not demand morality in art. And in proof of this he advances the fact that if we admit such a demand, Shakespear's "Romeo and Juliet," and Goethe's "Wilhelm Meister," would not fit into the definition of good art; but since both these books are included in our canon of art, he concludes that the demand is unjust. And therefore it is necessary to find a definition of art which shall fit the works; and instead of a demand for morality, Folgeldt postulates as the basis of art a demand for the important (*Bedeutungsvolles*).

All the existing æsthetic standards are built on this plan. Instead of giving a definition of true art, and then deciding what is and what is not good art by judging whether a work conforms or does not conform to the definition, a certain class of works, which for some reason please a certain circle of people, is accepted as being art, and a definition of art is then devised to cover all these productions. I recently came upon a remarkable instance of this method in a very good German work, "The History of Art in the Nineteenth Cen-

tury," by Muther. Describing the pre-Raphaelites, the Decadents and the Symbolists (who are already included in the canon of art), he not only does not venture to blame their tendency, but earnestly endeavors to widen his standard so that it may include them all, they appearing to him to represent a legitimate reaction from the excesses of realism. No matter what insanities appear in art, when once they find acceptance among the upper classes of our society, a theory is quickly invented to explain and sanction them; just as if there had never been periods in history when certain special circles of people recognized and approved false, deformed, and insensate art which subsequently left no trace and has been utterly forgotten. And to what lengths the insanity and deformity of art may go, especially when, as in our days, it knows that it is considered infallible, may be seen by what is being done in the art of our circle to-day.

So that the theory of art, founded on beauty, expounded by æsthetics, and, in dim outline, professed by the public, is nothing but the setting up as good of that which has pleased and pleases us, *i.e.* pleases a certain class of people.

In order to define any human activity, it is necessary to understand its sense and importance. And, in order to do that, it is primarily necessary to examine that activity in itself, in its dependence on its causes, and in connection with its effects, and not merely in relation to the pleasure we can get from it.

If we say that the aim of any activity is merely our pleasure, and define it solely by that pleasure, our definition will evidently be a false one. But this is precisely what has occurred in the efforts to define art. Now, if we consider the food question, it will not occur to anyone to affirm that the importance of food consists in the pleasure we receive when eating it. Every one understands that the satisfaction of our taste cannot serve as a basis for our definition of the merits of food, and that we have therefore no right to presuppose that the dinners with cayenne pepper, Limburg cheese,

alcohol, etc., to which we are accustomed and which please us, form the very best human food.

And in the same way, beauty, or that which pleases us, can in no sense serve as the basis for the definition of art; nor can a series of objects which afford us pleasure serve as the model of what art should be.

To see the aim and purpose of art in the pleasure we get from it, is like assuming (as is done by people of the lowest moral development, *e.g.* by savages) that the purpose and aim of food is the pleasure derived when consuming it.

Just as people who conceive the aim and purpose of food to be pleasure cannot recognize the real meaning of eating, so people who consider the aim of art to be pleasure cannot realize its true meaning and purpose, because they attribute to an activity, the meaning of which lies in its connection with other phenomena of life, the false and exceptional aim of pleasure. People come to understand that the meaning of eating lies in the nourishment of the body only when they cease to consider that the object of that activity is pleasure. And it is the same with regard to art. People will come to understand the meaning of art only when they cease to consider that the aim of that activity is beauty, *i.e.* pleasure. The acknowledgment of beauty (*i.e.* of a certain kind of pleasure received from art) as being the aim of art, not only fails to assist us in finding a definition of what art is, but, on the contrary, by transferring the question into a region quite foreign to art (into metaphysical, psychological, physiological, and even historical discussions as to why such a production pleases one person, and such another displeases or pleases some one else), it renders such definition impossible. And since discussions as to why one man likes pears and another prefers meat do not help toward finding a definition of what is essential in nourishment, so the solution of questions of taste in art (to which the discussions on art involuntarily come), not only does not help to make clear what this particular human activity which we call art really consists in, but renders such

elucidation quite impossible, until we rid ourselves of a conception which justifies every kind of art, at the cost of confusing the whole matter.

To the question, What is this art, to which is offered up the labor of millions, the very lives of men, and even morality itself? we have extracted replies from the existing æsthetics, which all amount to this · that the aim of art is beauty, that beauty is recognized by the enjoyment it gives, and that artistic enjoyment is a good and important thing, because it *is* enjoyment. In a word, that enjoyment is good because it is enjoyment. Thus, what is considered the definition of art is no definition at all, but only a shuffle to justify existing art. Therefore, however strange it may seem to say so, in spite of the mountains of books written about art, no exact definition of art has been constructed. And the reason of this is that the conception of art has been based on the conception of beauty.

CHAPTER V

What is art, if we put aside the conception of beauty, which confuses the whole matter? The latest and most comprehensible definitions of art, apart from the conception of beauty, are the following: (1 *a*) Art is an activity arising even in the animal kingdom, and springing from sexual desire and the propensity to play (Schiller, Darwin, Spencer), and (1 *b*) accompanied by a pleasurable excitement of the nervous system (Grant Allen). This is the physiological-evolutionary definition. (2) Art is the external manifestation, by means of lines, colors, movements, sounds, or words, of emotions felt by man (Véron). This is the experimental definition. According to the very latest definition (Sully), (3) Art is "the production of some permanent object or passing action, which is fitted, not only to supply an active enjoyment to the producer, but to convey a pleasurable impression to a number of spectators or listeners, quite apart from any personal advantage to be derived from it."

Notwithstanding the superiority of these definitions to the metaphysical definitions which depended on the conception of beauty, they are yet far from exact. (1 *a*) The first, the physiological-evolutionary definition, is inexact, because, instead of speaking about the artistic activity itself, which is the real matter in hand, it treats of the derivation of art. The modification of it (1 *b*), based on the physiological effects on the human organism, is inexact, because within the limits of such definition many other human activities can be included, as has occurred in the neo-æsthetic theories, which reckon as art the preparation of handsome clothes, pleasant scents, and even of victuals.

The experimental definition (2), which makes art consist in the expression of emotions, is inexact, because a man may express his emotions by means of lines, colors, sounds, or words, and yet may not act on others by such expression; and then the manifestation of his emotions is not art.

The third definition (that of Sully) is inexact, because in the production of objects or actions affording pleasure to the producer and a pleasant emotion to the spectators or hearers apart from personal advantage may be included the showing of conjuring tricks or gymnastic exercises, and other activities which are not art. And, further, many things, the production of which does not afford pleasure to the producer, and the sensation received from which is unpleasant, such as gloomy, heart-rending scenes in a poetic description or a play, may nevertheless be undoubted works of art.

The inaccuracy of all these definitions arises from the fact that in them all (as also in the metaphysical definitions) the object considered is the pleasure art may give, and not the purpose it may serve in the life of man and of humanity.

In order correctly to define art, it is necessary, first of all, to cease to consider it as a means to pleasure, and to consider it as one of the conditions of human life. Viewing it in this way, we cannot fail to observe that art is one of the means of intercourse between man and man.

Every work of art causes the receiver to enter into a certain kind of relationship both with him who produced, or is producing, the art, and with all those who, simultaneously, previously, or subsequently, receive the same artistic impression.

Speech, transmitting the thoughts and experiences of men, serves as a means of union among them, and art acts in a similar manner. The peculiarity of this latter means of intercourse, distinguishing it from intercourse by means of words, consists in this, that whereas by words a man transmits his thoughts to another, by means of art he transmits his feelings.

The activity of art is based on the fact that a man, receiving through his sense of hearing or sight another man's expression of feeling, is capable of experiencing the emotion which moved the man who expressed it. To take the simplest example: one man laughs, and another, who hears, becomes merry; or a man weeps, and another, who hears, feels sorrow. A man is excited or irritated, and another man, seeing him, comes to a similar state of mind. By his movements, or by the sounds of his voice, a man expresses courage and determination, or sadness and calmness, and this state of mind passes on to others. A man suffers, expressing his sufferings by groans and spasms, and this suffering transmits itself to other people; a man expresses his feeling of admiration, devotion, fear, respect, or love to certain objects, persons, or phenomena, and others are infected by the same feelings of admiration, devotion, fear, respect, or love to the same objects, persons, and phenomena.

And it is on this capacity of man to receive another man's expression of feeling, and experience those feelings himself, that the activity of art is based.

If a man infects another or others, directly, immediately, by his appearance, or by the sounds he gives vent to at the very time he experiences the feeling; if he causes another man to yawn when he himself cannot help yawning, or to laugh or cry when he himself is obliged to laugh or cry, or to suffer when he himself is suffering — that does not amount to art.

Art begins when one person, with the object of joining another or others to himself in one and the same feeling, expresses that feeling by certain external indications. To take the simplest example: a boy, having experienced, let us say, fear on encountering a wolf, relates that encounter; and, in order to evoke in others the feeling he has experienced, describes himself, his condition before the encounter, the surroundings, the wood, his own light-heartedness, and then the wolf's appearance, its movements, the distance between himself and the wolf, etc. All this, if only the boy, when telling the story, again experiences the feelings he had lived through and infects the hearers and compels them to feel what the narrator had experienced, is art. If even the boy had not seen a wolf but had frequently been afraid of one, and if, wishing to evoke in others the fear he had felt, he invented an encounter with a wolf, and recounted it so as to make his hearers share the feelings he experienced when he feared the wolf, that also would be art. And just in the same way it is art if a man, having experienced either the fear of suffering or the attraction of enjoyment (whether in reality or in imagination), expresses these feelings on canvas or in marble so that others are infected by them. And it is also art if a man feels or imagines to himself feelings of delight, gladness, sorrow, despair, courage, or despondency, and the transition from one to another of these feelings, and expresses these feelings by sounds, so that the hearers are infected by them, and experience them as they were experienced by the composer.

The feelings with which the artist infects others may be most various, — very strong or very weak, very important or very insignificant, very bad or very good: feelings of love for native land, self-devotion and submission to fate or to God expressed in a drama, raptures of lovers described in a novel, feelings of voluptuousness expressed in a picture, courage expressed in a triumphal march, merriment evoked by a dance, humor evoked by a funny story, the feeling of quietness transmitted by an evening landscape or by a lullaby, or the

feeling of admiration evoked by a beautiful arabesque — it is all art.

If only the spectators or auditors are infected by the feelings which the author has felt, it is art.

To evoke in oneself a feeling one has once experienced, and having evoked it in oneself, then, by means of movements, lines, colors, sounds, or forms expressed in words, so to transmit that feeling that others may experience the same feeling — this is the activity of art.

Art is a human activity, consisting in this, that one man consciously, by means of certain external signs, hands on to others feelings he has lived through, and that other people are infected by these feelings, and also experience them.

Art is not, as the metaphysicians say, the manifestation of some mysterious Idea of beauty, or God; it is not, as the æsthetical physiologists say, a game in which man lets off his excess of stored-up energy; it is not the expression of man's emotions by external signs; it is not the production of pleasing objects; and, above all, it is not pleasure; but it is a means of union among men, joining them together in the same feelings, and indispensable for the life and progress toward well-being of individuals and of humanity.

As, thanks to man's capacity to express thoughts by words, every man may know all that has been done for him in the realms of thought by all humanity before his day, and can, in the present, thanks to this capacity to understand the thoughts of others, become a sharer in their activity, and can himself hand on to his contemporaries and descendants the thoughts he has assimilated from others, as well as those which have arisen within himself; so, thanks to man's capacity to be infected with the feelings of others by means of art, all that is being lived through by his contemporaries is accessible to him, as well as the feelings experienced by men thousands of years ago, and he has also the possibility of transmitting his own feelings to others.

If people lacked this capacity to receive the thoughts conceived by the men who preceded them, and to pass

on to others their own thoughts, men would be like wild beasts, or like Kaspar Hauser.[1]

And if men lacked this other capacity of being infected by art, people might be almost more savage still, and, above all, more separated from, and more hostile to, one another.

And therefore the activity of art is a most important one, as important as the activity of speech itself, and as generally diffused.

We are accustomed to understand art to be only what we hear and see in theaters, concerts, and exhibitions; together with buildings, statues, poems, novels. .... But all this is but the smallest part of the art by which we communicate with each other in life. All human life is filled with works of art of every kind, — from cradle-song, jest, mimicry, the ornamentation of houses, dress, and utensils, up to church services, buildings, monuments, and triumphal processions. It is all artistic activity. So that by art, in the limited sense of the word, we do not mean all human activity transmitting feelings, but only that part which we for some reason select from it and to which we attach special importance.

This special importance has always been given by all men to that part of this activity which transmits feelings flowing from their religious perception, and this small part of art they have specifically called art, attaching to it the full meaning of the word.

That was how men of old — Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle — looked on art. Thus did the Hebrew prophets and the ancient Christians regard art; thus it was, and still is, understood by the Mahommedans, and thus is it still understood by religious folk among our own peasantry.

Some teachers of mankind — as Plato in his "Republic," and people such as the primitive Christians, the strict

[1] "The foundling of Nuremberg," found in the market-place of that town on 26th May, 1828, apparently some sixteen years old. He spoke little, and was almost totally ignorant even of common objects. He subsequently explained that he had been brought up in confinement underground, and visited by only one man, whom he saw but seldom. — Tr.

Mahommedans, and the Buddhists — have gone so far as to repudiate all art.

People viewing art in this way (in contradiction to the prevalent view of to-day, which regards any art as good if only it affords pleasure) considered, and consider, that art (as contrasted with speech, which need not be listened to) is so highly dangerous in its power to infect people against their wills, that mankind will lose far less by banishing all art than by tolerating each and every art.

Evidently such people were wrong in repudiating all art, for they denied that which cannot be denied, — one of the indispensable means of communication, without which mankind could not exist. But not less wrong are the people of civilized European society of our class and day, in favoring any art if it but serves beauty, *i.e.* gives people pleasure.

Formerly, people feared lest among the works of art there might chance to be some causing corruption, and they prohibited art altogether. Now, they only fear lest they should be deprived of any enjoyment art can afford, and patronize any art. And I think the last error is much grosser than the first, and that its consequences are far more harmful.

CHAPTER VI

But how could it happen that that very art, which in ancient times was merely tolerated (if tolerated at all), should have come, in our times, to be invariably considered a good thing if only it affords pleasure?

It has resulted from the following causes. The estimation of the value of art (*i.e.* of the feelings it transmits) depends on men's perception of the meaning of life; depends on what they consider to be the good and the evil of life. And what is good and what is evil is defined by what are termed religions.

Humanity unceasingly moves forward from a lower, more partial, and obscure understanding of life, to one

more general and more lucid. And in this, as in every movement, there are leaders, — those who have understood the meaning of life more clearly than others, — and of these advanced men there is always one who has, in his words and by his life, expressed this meaning more clearly, accessibly, and strongly than others. This man's expression of the meaning of life, together with those superstitions, traditions, and ceremonies which usually form themselves round the memory of such a man, is what is called a religion. Religions are the exponents of the highest comprehension of life accessible to the best and foremost men at a given time in a given society; a comprehension toward which, inevitably and irresistibly, all the rest of that society must advance. And therefore only religions have always served, and still serve, as bases for the valuation of human sentiments. If feelings bring men nearer the ideal their religion indicates, if they are in harmony with it and do not contradict it, they are good; if they estrange men from it and oppose it, they are bad.

If the religion places the meaning of life in worshiping one God and fulfilling what is regarded as His will, as was the case among the Jews, then the feelings flowing from love to that God, and to His law, successfully transmitted through the art of poetry by the prophets, by the psalms, or by the epic of the book of Genesis, is good, high art. All opposing that, as, for instance, the transmission of feelings of devotion to strange gods, or of feelings incompatible with the law of God, would be considered bad art. Or if, as was the case among the Greeks, the religion places the meaning of life in earthly happiness, in beauty and in strength, then art successfully transmitting the joy and energy of life would be considered good art, but art which transmitted feelings of effeminacy or despondency would be bad art. If the meaning of life is seen in the well-being of one's nation, or in honoring one's ancestors and continuing the mode of life led by them, as was the case among the Romans

and the Chinese respectively, then art transmitting feelings of joy at sacrificing one's personal well-being for the common weal, or at exalting one's ancestors and maintaining their traditions, would be considered good art, but art expressing feelings contrary to this would be regarded as bad. If the meaning of life is seen in freeing oneself from the yoke of animalism, as is the case among the Buddhists, then art successfully transmitting feelings that elevate the soul and humble the flesh will be good art, and all that transmits feelings strengthening the bodily passions will be bad art.

In every age, and in every human society, there exists a religious sense, common to that whole society, of what is good and what is bad, and it is this religious conception that decides the value of the feelings transmitted by art. And therefore, among all nations, art which transmitted feelings considered to be good by this general religious sense was recognized as being good and was encouraged; but art which transmitted feelings considered to be bad by this general religious conception, was recognized as being bad, and was rejected. All the rest of the immense field of art by means of which people communicate one with another, was not esteemed at all, and was only noticed when it ran counter to the religious conception of its age, and then merely to be repudiated. Thus it was among all nations, — Greeks, Jews, Indians, Egyptians, and Chinese, — and so it was when Christianity appeared.

The Christianity of the first centuries recognized as productions of good art only legends, lives of saints, sermons, prayers, and hymn-singing, evoking love of Christ, emotion at His life, desire to follow His example, renunciation of worldly life, humility, and the love of others; all productions transmitting feelings of personal enjoyment they considered to be bad, and therefore rejected: for instance, tolerating plastic representations only when they were symbolical, they rejected all the pagan sculptures.

This was so among the Christians of the first cen-

turies, who accepted Christ's teaching, if not quite in its true form, at least not in the perverted, paganized form in which it was accepted subsequently.

But besides this Christianity, from the time of the wholesale conversion of nations by order of the authorities, as in the days of Constantine, Charlemagne, and Vladimir, there appeared another, a Church Christianity, which was nearer to paganism than to Christ's teaching. And this Church Christianity, in accordance with its own teaching, estimated quite otherwise the feelings of people and the productions of art which transmitted those feelings.

This Church Christianity not only did not acknowledge the fundamental and essential positions of true Christianity, — the immediate relationship of each man to the Father, the consequent brotherhood and equality of all men, and the substitution of humility and love in place of every kind of violence, — but, on the contrary, having set up a heavenly hierarchy similar to the pagan mythology, and having introduced the worship of Christ, of the Virgin, of angels, of apostles, of saints, and of martyrs, and not only of these divinities themselves, but also of their images, it made blind faith in the Church and its ordinances the essential point of its teaching.

However foreign this teaching may have been to true Christianity; however degraded, not only in comparison with true Christianity, but even with the life-conception of Romans such as Julian and others, — it was, for all that, to the barbarians who accepted it, a higher doctrine than their former adoration of gods, heroes, and good and bad spirits. And therefore this teaching was a religion to them, and on the basis of that religion the art of the time was assessed. And art transmitting pious adoration of the Virgin, Jesus, the saints and the angels, a blind faith in and submission to the Church, fear of torments and hope of blessedness in a life beyond the grave, was considered good; all art opposed to this was considered bad.

The teaching on the basis of which this art arose

was a perversion of Christ's teaching, but the art which sprang up on this perverted teaching was nevertheless a true art, because it corresponded to the religious view of life held by the people among whom it arose.

The artists of the Middle Ages, vitalized by the same source of feeling — religion — as the mass of the people, and transmitting, in architecture, sculpture, painting, music, poetry or drama, the feelings and states of mind they experienced, were true artists; and their activity, founded on the highest conceptions accessible to their age and common to the entire people, though, for our times a mean art, was, nevertheless a true one, shared by the whole community.

And this was the state of things until, in the upper, rich, more educated classes of European society, doubt arose as to the truth of that understanding of life which was expressed by Church Christianity. When, after the Crusades and the maximum development of papal power and its abuses, people of the rich classes became acquainted with the wisdom of the classics, and saw, on the one hand, the reasonable lucidity of the teaching of the ancient sages, and, on the other hand, the incompatibility of the Church doctrine with the teaching of Christ, they lost all possibility of continuing to believe the Church teaching.

If, in externals, they still kept to the forms of Church teaching, they could no longer believe in it, and held to it only by inertia and for the sake of influencing the masses, who continued to believe blindly in Church doctrine, and whom the upper classes, for their own advantage, considered it necessary to support in those beliefs.

So that a time came when Church Christianity ceased to be the general religious doctrine of all Christian people; some — the masses — continued blindly to believe in it, but the upper classes — those in whose hands lay the power and wealth, and therefore the leisure to produce art and the means to stimulate it — ceased to believe in that teaching.

In respect to religion, the upper circles of the Middle Ages found themselves in the same position in which the educated Romans were before Christianity arose, *i.e.* they no longer believed in the religion of the masses, but had no beliefs to put in place of the worn-out Church doctrine which for them had lost its meaning.

There was only this difference: that whereas for the Romans, who lost faith in their emperor-gods and household-gods, it was impossible to extract anything further from all the complex mythology they had borrowed from all the conquered nations, and it was consequently necessary to find a completely new conception of life, the people of the Middle Ages, when they doubted the truth of the Church teaching, had no need to seek a fresh one. That Christian teaching which they professed in a perverted form as Church doctrine had mapped out the path of human progress so far ahead that they had but to rid themselves of those perversions which hid the teaching announced by Christ, and to adopt its real meaning — if not completely, then at least in some greater degree than that in which the Church had held it. And this was partially done, not only in the reformations of Wyclif, Huss, Luther, and Calvin, but by all that current of non-Church Christianity represented in earlier times by the Paulicians, the Bogomili,[1] and, afterward, by the Waldenses and the other non-Church Christians who were called heretics. But this could be, and was, done chiefly by poor people — who did not rule. A few of the rich and strong, like Francis of Assisi and others, accepted the Christian teaching in its full significance, even though it undermined their privileged positions. But most people of the upper classes (though in the depth of their souls they had lost faith in the Church teaching) could not or would not act thus, because the essence of that Christian view of life, which stood ready to be adopted when once they rejected the Church faith,

[1] Eastern sects well known in early Church history, who rejected the Church's rendering of Christ's teaching, and were cruelly persecuted. — Tr.

was a teaching of the brotherhood (and therefore the equality) of man, and this negatived those privileges on which they lived, in which they had grown up and been educated, and to which they were accustomed. Not, in the depth of their hearts, believing in the Church teaching, — which had outlived its age and had no longer any true meaning for them, — and not being strong enough to accept true Christianity, men of these rich, governing classes — popes, kings, dukes, and all the great ones of the earth — were left without any religion, with but the external forms of one, which they supported as being profitable and even necessary for themselves, since these forms screened a teaching which justified those privileges which they made use of. In reality, these people believed in nothing, just as the Romans of the first centuries of our era believed in nothing. But at the same time these were the people who had the power and the wealth, and these were the people who rewarded art and directed it.

And, let it be noticed, it was just among these people that there grew up an art esteemed, not according to its success in expressing men's religious feelings, but in proportion to its beauty, — in other words, according to the enjoyment it gave.

No longer able to believe in the Church religion, whose falsehood they had detected, and incapable of accepting true Christian teaching, which denounced their whole manner of life, these rich and powerful people, stranded without any religious conception of life, involuntarily returned to that pagan view of things which places life's meaning in personal enjoyment. And then took place among the upper classes what is called the "Renaissance of science and art," and which was really not only a denial of every religion, but also an assertion that religion is unnecessary.

The Church doctrine is so coherent a system that it cannot be altered or corrected without destroying it altogether. As soon as doubt arose with regard to the infallibility of the Pope (and this doubt was then in the minds of all educated people), doubt inevitably followed

as to the truth of tradition. But doubt as to the truth of tradition is fatal not only to popery and Catholicism, but also to the whole Church creed, with all its dogmas: the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, and the Trinity; and it destroys the authority of the Scriptures, since they were considered to be inspired only because the tradition of the Church decided it so.

So that the majority of the highest classes of that age, even the popes and the ecclesiastics, really believed in nothing at all. In the Church doctrine these people did not believe, for they saw its insolvency; but neither could they follow Francis of Assisi, Keltchitsky,[1] and most of the heretics, in acknowledging the moral, social teaching of Christ, for that teaching undermined their social position. And so these people remained without any religious view of life. And, having none, they could have no standard wherewith to estimate what was good and what was bad art but that of personal enjoyment. And, having acknowledged their criterion of what was good to be pleasure, *i.e.* beauty, these people of the upper classes of European society went back in their comprehension of art to the gross conception of the primitive Greeks which Plato had already condemned. And conformably to this understanding of life, a theory of art was formulated.

CHAPTER VII

From the time that people of the upper classes lost faith in Church Christianity, beauty (*i.e.* the pleasure received from art) became their standard of good and bad art. And, in accordance with that view, an æsthetic theory naturally sprang up among those upper classes justifying such a conception, — a theory according to which the aim of art is to exhibit beauty. The partizans of this æsthetic theory, in confirmation of its truth, af-

[1] Keltchitsky, a Bohemian of the fifteenth century, was the author of a remarkable book, "The Net of Faith," directed against Church and State. It is mentioned in Tolstoï's "The Kingdom of God is Within You." — Tr.

firmed that it was no invention of their own, but that it existed in the nature of things, and was recognized even by the ancient Greeks. But this assertion was quite arbitrary, and has no foundation other than the fact that among the ancient Greeks, in consequence of the low grade of their moral ideal (as compared with the Christian), their conception of the good, *τὸ ἀγαθόν*, was not yet sharply divided from their conception of the beautiful, *τὸ καλόν*.

That highest perfection of goodness (not only not identical with beauty, but, for the most part, contrasting with it) which was discerned by the Jews even in the times of Isaiah, and fully expressed by Christianity, was quite unknown to the Greeks. They supposed that the beautiful must necessarily also be the good. It is true that their foremost thinkers — Socrates, Plato, Aristotle — felt that goodness may happen not to coincide with beauty. Socrates expressly subordinated beauty to goodness; Plato, to unite the two conceptions, spoke of spiritual beauty; while Aristotle demanded from art that it should have a moral influence on people (*κάθαρσις*). But, notwithstanding all this, they could not quite dismiss the notion that beauty and goodness coincide.

And consequently, in the language of that period, a compound word (*καλο-κἀγαθία*, beauty-goodness) came into use to express that notion.

Evidently the Greek sages began to draw near to that perception of goodness which is expressed in Buddhism and in Christianity, and they got entangled in defining the relation between goodness and beauty. Plato's reasonings about beauty and goodness are full of contradictions. And it was just this confusion of ideas that those Europeans of a later age, who had lost all faith, tried to elevate into a law. They tried to prove that this union of beauty and goodness is inherent in the very essence of things; that beauty and goodness must coincide; and that the word and conception *καλο-κἀγαθία* (which had a meaning for Greeks, but has none at all for Christians) represents the highest ideal of humanity. On this misunderstanding the new science of æsthetics was

built up. And, to justify its existence, the teachings of the ancients on art were so twisted as to make it appear that this invented science of æsthetics had existed among the Greeks.

In reality, the reasoning of the ancients on art was quite unlike ours. As Benard, in his book on the æsthetics of Aristotle, quite justly remarks, "*Pour qui veut y regarder de près, la théorie du beau et celle de l'art sont tout à fait séparées dans Aristote, comme elles le sont dans Platon et chez tous leurs successeurs*" ("L'Esthétique d'Aristote et de ses Successeurs," Paris, 1889, p. 28).[1] And indeed the reasoning of the ancients on art not only does not confirm our science of æsthetics, but rather contradicts its doctrine of beauty. But nevertheless all the æsthetic guides, from Schasler to Knight, declare that the science of the beautiful — æsthetic science — was commenced by the ancients, by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle; and was continued, they say, partially by the Epicureans and Stoics: by Seneca and Plutarch, down to Plotinus. But it is supposed that this science, by some unfortunate accident, suddenly vanished in the fourth century, and stayed away for about 1500 years, and only after these 1500 years had passed did it revive in Germany, 1750 A.D., in Baumgarten's doctrine.

After Plotinus, says Schasler, fifteen centuries passed away during which there was not the slightest scientific interest felt for the world of beauty and art. These one and a half thousand years, says he, have been lost to æsthetics, and have contributed nothing toward the erection of the learned edifice of this science.[2]

[1] Any one examining closely may see that the theory of beauty and that of art are quite separated in Aristotle as they are in Plato and in all their successors.

[2] Die Lücke von fünf Jahrhunderten, welche zwischen den Kunst-philosophischen Betrachtungen des Plato und Aristoteles und die des Plotins fällt, kann zwar auffällig erscheinen; dennoch kann man eigentlich nicht sagen, dass in dieser Zwischenzeit überhaupt von ästhetischen Dingen nicht die Rede gewesen; oder dass gar ein völliger Mangel an Zusammenhang zwischen den Kunst-anschauungen des letztgenannten Philosophen und denen der ersteren existire. Freilich wurde die von Aristoteles begründete Wissenschaft in Nichts dadurch gefördert; immerhin aber zeigt sich in jener Zwischenzeit noch ein gewisses Interesse für ästhetische

In reality nothing of the kind happened. The science of æsthetics, the science of the beautiful, neither did nor could vanish, because it never existed. Simply, the Greeks (just like everybody else, always and everywhere) considered art (like everything else) good only when it served goodness (as they understood goodness), and bad when it was in opposition to that goodness. And the Greeks themselves were so little developed morally, that goodness and beauty seemed to them to coincide. On that obsolete Greek view of life was erected the science of æsthetics, invented by men of the eighteenth century, and especially shaped and mounted in Baumgarten's theory. The Greeks (as any one may see who will read Benard's admirable book on Aristotle and his successors and Walter's work on Plato) never had a science of æsthetics.

Æsthetic theories arose about one hundred and fifty years ago among the wealthy classes of the Christian European world, and arose simultaneously among different nations, — German, Italian, Dutch, French, and English. The founder and organizer of it, who gave it a scientific, theoretic form, was Baumgarten.

With a characteristically German, external exactitude, pedantry, and symmetry, he devised and expounded this extraordinary theory. And, notwithstanding its obvious insolidity, nobody else's theory so pleased the cultured crowd, or was accepted so readily and with such an absence of criticism. It so suited the people of the upper classes, that to this day, notwithstanding its entirely fantastic character and the arbitrary nature of its assertions, it is repeated by learned and unlearned as though it were something indubitable and self-evident.

Fragen. Nach Plotin aber, die wenigen, ihm in der Zeit nahestehenden Philosophen, wie Longin, Augustin, u. s. f. kommen, wie wir gesehen, kaum in Betracht und schliessen sich übrigens in ihrer Anschauungsweise an ihn an, — vergehen nicht fünf, sondern *fünfzehn Jahrhunderte*, in denen von irgend einer wissenschaftlichen Interesse für die Welt des Schönen und der Kunst nichts zu spüren ist.

Diese anderthalbtausend Jahre, innerhalb deren der Weltgeist durch die mannigfachsten Kämpfe hindurch zu einer völlig neuen Gestaltung des Lebens sich durcharbeitete, sind für die Aesthetik, hinsichtlich des weiteren Ausbaus dieser Wissenschaft verloren. — MAX SCHASLER.

Habent sua fata libelli pro capite lectoris, and so, or even more so, theories *habent sua fata* according to the condition of error in which that society is living, among whom and for whom the theories are invented. If a theory justifies the false position in which a certain part of a society is living, then, however unfounded or even obviously false the theory may be, it is accepted, and becomes an article of faith to that section of society. Such, for instance, was the celebrated and unfounded theory, expounded by Malthus, of the tendency of that population of the world to increase in geometrical progression, but of the means of sustenance to increase only in arithmetical progression, and of the consequent over-population of the world; such, also, was the theory (an outgrowth of the Malthusian) of selection and struggle for existence as the basis of human progress. Such, again, is Marx's theory, which regards the gradual destruction of small private production by large capitalistic production, now going on around us, as an inevitable decree of fate. However unfounded such theories are, however contrary to all that is known and confessed by humanity, and however obviously immoral they may be, they are accepted with credulity, pass uncriticized, and are preached, perchance for centuries, until the conditions are destroyed which they served to justify, or until their absurdity has become too evident. To this class belongs this astonishing theory of the Baumgartenian Trinity, — Goodness, Beauty, and Truth, — according to which it appears that the very best that can be done by the art of nations after 1900 years of Christian teaching, is to choose as the ideal of their life the ideal that was held by a small, semi-savage, slave-holding people who lived 2000 years ago, who imitated the nude human body extremely well, and erected buildings pleasant to look at. All these incompatibilities pass completely unnoticed. Learned people write long, cloudy treatises on beauty as a member of the æsthetic trinity of Beauty, Truth, and Goodness: *das Schöne*, *das Wahre*, *das Gute*; *le Beau*, *le Vrai*, *le Bon*, are repeated, with capital letters, by philosophers, æstheticians, and artists, by private in-

dividuals, by novelists, and by *feuilletonistes*, and they all think, when pronouncing these sacrosanct words, that they speak of something quite definite and solid — something on which they can base their opinions. In reality, these words not only have no definite meaning, but they hinder us in attaching any definite meaning to existing art; they are wanted only for the purpose of justifying the false importance we attribute to an art that transmits every kind of feeling, if only those feelings afford us pleasure.

CHAPTER VIII

But if art is a human activity having for its purpose the transmission to others of the highest and best feelings to which men have risen, how could it be that humanity for a certain rather considerable period of its existence (from the time people ceased to believe in Church doctrine down to the present day) should exist without this important activity, and, instead of it, should put up with an insignificant artistic activity only affording pleasure?

In order to answer this question, it is necessary, first of all, to correct the current error people make in attributing to our art the significance of true, universal art. We are so accustomed, not only naïvely to consider the Circassian family the best stock of people, but also the Anglo-Saxon race the best race if we are Englishmen or Americans, or the Teutonic if we are Germans, or the Gallo-Latin if we are French, or the Slavonic if we are Russians, that, when speaking of our own art, we feel fully convinced, not only that our art is true art, but even that it is the best and only true art. But in reality our art is not only not the only art (as the Bible once was held to be the only book), but it is not even the art of the whole of Christendom — only of a small section of that part of humanity. It was correct to speak of a national Jewish, Grecian, or

Egyptian art, and one may speak of a now-existing Chinese, Japanese, or Indian art shared in by a whole people. Such art, common to a whole nation, existed in Russia till Peter the First's time, and existed in the rest of Europe until the thirteenth or fourteenth century; but since the upper classes of European society, having lost faith in the Church teaching, did not accept real Christianity but remained without any faith, one can no longer speak of an art of the Christian nations in the sense of the whole of art. Since the upper classes of the Christian nations lost faith in Church Christianity, the art of those upper classes has separated itself from the art of the rest of the people, and there have been two arts, — the art of the people and genteel art. And therefore the answer to the question, How it could occur that humanity lived for a certain period without real art, replacing it by art which served enjoyment only? is, that not all humanity, nor even any considerable portion of it, lived without real art, but only the highest classes of European Christian society, and even they only for a comparatively short time, — from the commencement of the Renaissance down to our own day.

And the consequence of this absence of true art showed itself, inevitably, in the corruption of that class which nourished itself on the false art. All the confused, unintelligible theories of art, all the false and contradictory judgments on art, and particularly the self-confident stagnation of our art in its false path, all arise from the assertion, which has come into common use and is accepted as an unquestioned truth, but is yet amazingly and palpably false, the assertion, namely, that the art of our upper classes [1] is the whole of art, the true, the only, the universal art. And although this assertion (which is precisely similar to the assertion made by religious people of the various Churches who consider that theirs is the only true religion) is quite arbitrary

[1] The contrast made is between the classes and the masses; between those who do not and those who do earn their bread by productive manual labor; the middle classes being taken as an offshoot of the upper classes. — Tr.

and obviously unjust, yet it is calmly repeated by all the people of our circle with full faith in its infallibility.

The art we have is the whole of art, the real, the only art, and yet two-thirds of the human race (all the peoples of Asia and Africa) live and die knowing nothing of this sole and supreme art. And even in our Christian society hardly one per cent of the people make use of this art which we speak of as being the *whole* of art; the remaining ninety-nine per cent live and die, generation after generation, crushed by toil, and never tasting this art, which, moreover, is of such a nature that, if they could get it, they would not understand anything of it. We, according to the current æsthetic theory, acknowledge art as one of the highest manifestations of the Idea, God, Beauty, or as the highest spiritual enjoyment; furthermore, we hold that all people have equal rights, if not to material, at any rate to spiritual well-being; and yet ninety-nine per cent of our European population live and die, generation after generation, crushed by toil, much of which toil is necessary for the production of our art which they never use, and we, nevertheless, calmly assert that the art which we produce is the real, true, only art — all of art!

To the remark that if our art is the true art every one should have the benefit of it, the usual reply is that if not everybody at present makes use of existing art, the fault lies, not in the art, but in the false organization of society; that one can imagine to oneself, in the future, a state of things in which physical labor will be partly superseded by machinery, partly lightened by its just distribution, and that labor for the production of art will be taken in turns; that there is no need for some people always to sit below the stage moving the decorations, winding up the machinery, working at the piano or French horn, and setting type and printing books, but that the people who do all this work might be engaged only a few hours per day, and in their leisure time might enjoy all the blessings of art.

That is what the defenders of our exclusive art say. But I think they do not themselves believe it. They

cannot help knowing that fine art can arise only on the slavery of the masses of the people, and can continue only as long as that slavery lasts, and they cannot help knowing that only under conditions of intense labor for the workers, can specialists — writers, musicians, dancers, and actors — arrive at that fine degree of perfection to which they do attain, or produce their refined works of art; and only under the same conditions can there be a fine public to esteem such productions. Free the slaves of capital, and it will be impossible to produce such refined art.

But even were we to admit the inadmissible, and say that means may be found by which art (that art which among us is considered to be art) may be accessible to the whole people, another consideration presents itself showing that fashionable art cannot be the whole of art, viz., the fact that it is completely unintelligible to the people. Formerly men wrote poems in Latin, but now their artistic productions are as unintelligible to the common folk as if they were written in Sanscrit. The usual reply to this is, that if the people do not now understand this art of ours, it only proves that they are undeveloped, and that this has been so at each fresh step forward made by art. First it was not understood, but afterward people got accustomed to it.

"It will be the same with our present art; it will be understood when everybody is as well educated as we are — the people of the upper classes — who produce this art," say the defenders of our art. But this assertion is evidently even more unjust than the former; for we know that the majority of the productions of the art of the upper classes, such as various odes, poems, dramas, cantatas, pastorals, pictures, etc., which delighted the people of the upper classes when they were produced, never were afterward either understood or valued by the great masses of mankind, but have remained, what they were at first, a mere pastime for rich people of their time, for whom alone they ever were of any importance. It is also often urged, in proof of the assertion that the people will some day understand our art,

that some productions of so-called "classical" poetry, music, or painting, which formerly did not please the masses, do — now that they have been offered to them from all sides — begin to please these same masses; but this only shows that the crowd, especially the half-spoilt town crowd, can easily (its taste having been perverted) be accustomed to any sort of art. Moreover, this art is not produced by these masses, nor even chosen by them, but is energetically thrust upon them in those public places in which art is accessible to the people. For the great majority of working-people, our art, besides being inaccessible on account of its costliness, is strange in its very nature, transmitting, as it does, the feelings of people far removed from those conditions of laborious life which are natural to the great body of humanity. That which is enjoyment to a man of the rich classes is incomprehensible, as a pleasure, to a working-man, and evokes in him, either no feeling at all, or only a feeling quite contrary to that which it evokes in an idle and satiated man. Such feelings as form the chief subjects of present-day art — say, for instance, honor,[1] patriotism, and amorousness — evoke in a working-man only bewilderment and contempt, or indignation. So that even if a possibility were given to the laboring classes, in their free time, to see, to read, and to hear all that forms the flower of contemporary art (as is done to some extent, in towns, by means of picture galleries, popular concerts, and libraries), the working-man (to the extent to which he is a laborer, and has not begun to pass into the ranks of those perverted by idleness) would be able to make nothing of our fine art, and if he did understand it, that which he understood would not elevate his soul, but would certainly, in most cases, pervert it. To thoughtful and sincere people there can, therefore, be no doubt that the art of our upper classes never can be the art of the whole people. But if art is an important matter, a spiritual blessing, essential for all men ("like religion," as the

[1] Dueling is still customary among the higher circles in Russia, as in other continental countries. — TR.

devotees of art are fond of saying), then it should be accessible to every one. And if, as in our day, it is not accessible to all men, then one of two things: either art is not the vital matter it is represented to be, or that art which we call art is not the real thing.

The dilemma is inevitable, and therefore clever and immoral people avoid it by denying one side of it, viz., denying that the common people have a right to art. These people simply and boldly speak out (what lies at the heart of the matter), and say that the participators in and utilizers of what, in their esteem, is highly beautiful art, *i.e.* art furnishing the greatest enjoyment, can only be "schöne Geister," "the elect," as the romanticists called them, the "Uebermenschen," as they are called by the followers of Nietzsche; the remaining vulgar herd, incapable of experiencing these pleasures, must serve the exalted pleasures of this superior breed of people. The people who express these views at least do not pretend, and do not try, to combine the incombinable, but frankly admit, what is the case, that our art is an art of the upper classes only. So essentially art has been, and is, understood by every one engaged on it in our society.

CHAPTER IX

The unbelief of the upper classes of the European world had this effect — that instead of an artistic activity aiming at transmitting the highest feelings to which humanity has attained, — those flowing from religious perception, — we have an activity which aims at affording the greatest enjoyment to a certain class of society. And of all the immense domain of art, that part has been fenced off, and is alone called art, which affords enjoyment to the people of this particular circle.

Apart from the moral effects on European society of such a selection from the whole sphere of art of what did not deserve such a valuation, and the acknowledgment of it as important art, this perversion of art has

weakened art itself, and well-nigh destroyed it. The first great result was that art was deprived of the infinite, varied, and profound religious subject-matter proper to it. The second result was that having only a small circle of people in view, it lost its beauty of form and became affected and obscure; and the third and chief result was that it ceased to be either natural or even sincere, and became thoroughly artifical and brain-spun.

The first result — the impoverishment of subject-matter — followed because only that is a true work of art which transmits fresh feelings not before experienced by man. As thought-product is only then real thought-product when it transmits new conceptions and thoughts, and does not merely repeat what was known before, so also an art-product is only then a genuine art-product when it brings a new feeling (however insignificant) into the current of human life. This explains why children and youths are so strongly impressed by those works of art which first transmit to them feelings they had not before experienced.

The same powerful impression is made on people by feelings which are quite new, and have never before been expressed by man. And it is the source from which such feelings flow of which the art of the upper classes has deprived itself by estimating feelings, not in conformity with religious perception, but according to the degree of enjoyment they afford. There is nothing older and more hackneyed than enjoyment, and there is nothing fresher than the feelings springing from the religious consciousness of each age. It could not be otherwise: man's enjoyment has limits established by his nature, but the movement forward of humanity, that which is voiced by religious perception, has no limits. At every forward step taken by humanity — and such steps are taken in consequence of the greater and greater elucidation of religious perception — men experience new and fresh feelings. And therefore only on the basis of religious perception (which shows the highest level of life-comprehension reached by the men of a certain period) can fresh emotion, never before felt

by man, arise. From the religious perception of the ancient Greeks flowed the really new, important, and endlessly varied feelings expressed by Homer and the tragic writers. It was the same among the Jews, who attained the religious conception of a single God, — from that perception flowed all those new and important emotions expressed by the prophets. It was the same for the poets of the Middle Ages, who if they believed in a heavenly hierarchy, believed also in the Catholic commune; and it is the same for a man of to-day who has grasped the religious conception of true Christianity, — the brotherhood of man.

The variety of fresh feelings flowing from religious perception is endless, and they are all new; for religious perception is nothing else than the first indication of that which is coming into existence, viz., the new relation of man to the world around him. But the feelings flowing from the desire for enjoyment are, on the contrary, not only limited, but were long ago experienced and expressed. And therefore the lack of belief of the upper classes of Europe has left them with an art fed on the poorest subject-matter.

The impoverishment of the subject-matter of upper-class art was further increased by the fact that, ceasing to be religious, it ceased also to be popular, and this again diminished the range of feelings which it transmitted. For the range of feelings experienced by the powerful and the rich, who have no experience of labor for the support of life, is far poorer, more limited, and more insignificant than the range of feelings natural to working-people.

People of our circle, æstheticians, usually think and say just the contrary of this. I remember how Gontchareff, the author, a very clever and educated man, but a thorough townsman and an æsthetician, said to me that after Tourgenieff's "Memoirs of a Sportsman" there was nothing left to write about in peasant life. It was all used up. The life of working-people seemed to him so simple that Tourgenieff's peasant stories had used up all there was to describe. The life of our wealthy

people, with their love-affairs and dissatisfaction with themselves, seemed to him full of inexhaustible subject-matter. One hero kissed his lady on her palm, another on her elbow, and a third somewhere else. One man is discontented through idleness, and another because people don't love him. And Gontchareff thought that in this sphere there is no end of variety. And this opinion — that the life of working-people is poor in subject-matter, but that our life, the life of the idle, is full of interest — is shared by very many people in our society. The life of a laboring man, with its endlessly varied forms of labor, and the dangers connected with this labor on sea and underground; his migrations, the intercourse with his employers, overseers, and companions, and with men of other religions and other nationalities; his struggles with nature and with wild beasts, the associations with domestic animals, the work in the forest, on the steppe, in the field, the garden, the orchard; his intercourse with wife and children, not only as with people near and dear to him, but as with co-workers and helpers in labor, replacing him in time of need; his concern in all economic questions, not as matters of display or discussion, but as problems of life for himself and his family; his pride in self-suppression and service to others, his pleasures of refreshment; and with all these interests permeated by a religious attitude toward these occurrences — all this to us, who have not these interests and possess no religious perception, seems monotonous in comparison with those small enjoyments and insignificant cares of our life, — a life, not of labor nor of production, but of consumption and destruction of that which others have produced for us. We think the feelings experienced by people of our day and our class are very important and varied; but in reality almost all the feelings of people of our class amount to but three very insignificant and simple feelings, — the feeling of pride, the feeling of sexual desire, and the feeling of weariness of life. These three feelings, with their outgrowths, form almost the only subject-matter of the art of the rich classes.

At first, at the very beginning of the separation of the exclusive art of the upper classes from universal art, its chief subject-matter was the feeling of pride. It was so at the time of the Renaissance and after it, when the chief subject of works of art was the laudation of the strong, — popes, kings, and dukes: odes and madrigals were written in their honor, and they were extolled in cantatas and hymns; their portraits were painted, and their statues carved, in various adulatory ways. Next, the element of sexual desire began more and more to enter into art, and (with very few exceptions, and in novels and dramas almost without exception) it has now become an essential feature of every art-product of the rich classes.

The third feeling transmitted by the art of the rich — that of discontent with life — appeared yet later in modern art. This feeling, which, at the commencement of the present century, was expressed only by exceptional men: by Byron, by Leopardi, and afterward by Heine, has latterly become fashionable, and is expressed by most ordinary and empty people. Most justly does the French critic Doumic characterize the works of the new writers: "*C'est la lassitude de vivre, le mépris de l'époque présente, le regret d'un autre temps aperçu à travers l'illusion de l'art, le goût du paradoxe, le besoin de se singulariser, une aspiration de raffinés vers la simplicité, l'adoration enfantine du merveilleux, la séduction maladive de la rêverie, l'ébranlement des nerfs, — surtout l'appel exaspéré de la sensualité*" ("Les Jeunes," René Doumic).[1] And, as a matter of fact, of these three feelings it is sensuality, the lowest (accessible not only to all men, but even to all animals), which forms the chief subject-matter of works of art of recent times.

From Boccaccio to Marcel Prévost, all the novels,

[1] It is the weariness of life, contempt for the present epoch, regret for another age seen through the illusion of art, a taste for paradox, a desire to be singular, a sentimental aspiration after simplicity, an infantine adoration of the marvelous, a sickly tendency toward reverie, a shattered condition of nerves, and, above all, the exasperated demand of sensuality.

poems, and verses invariably transmit the feeling of sexual love in its different forms. Adultery is not only the favorite, but almost the only theme of all the novels. A performance is not a performance unless, under some pretense, women appear with naked busts and limbs. Songs and *romances* — all are expressions of lust, idealized in various degrees.

A majority of the pictures by French artists represent female nakedness in various forms. In recent French literature there is hardly a page or a poem in which nakedness is not described, and in which, relevantly or irrelevantly, their favorite thought and word *nu* is not repeated a couple of times. There is a certain writer, René de Gourmond, who gets printed, and is considered talented. To get an idea of the new writers, I read his novel, "Les Chevaux de Diomède." It is a consecutive and detailed account of the sexual connections some gentleman had with various women. Every page contains lust-kindling descriptions. It is the same in Pierre Louÿs' book, "Aphrodite," which met with success; it is the same in a book I lately chanced upon, Huysmans' "Certains," and, with but few exceptions, it is the same in all the French novels. They are all the productions of people suffering from erotic mania. And these people are evidently convinced that as their whole life, in consequence of their diseased condition, is concentrated on amplifying various sexual abominations, therefore the life of all the world is similarly concentrated. And these people, suffering from erotic mania, are imitated throughout the whole artistic world of Europe and America.

Thus in consequence of the lack of belief and the exceptional manner of life of the wealthy classes, the art of those classes became impoverished in its subject-matter, and has sunk to the transmission of the feelings of pride, discontent with life, and, above all, of sexual desire.

CHAPTER X

In consequence of their unbelief, the art of the upper classes became poor in subject-matter. But besides that, becoming continually more and more exclusive, it became at the same time continually more and more involved, affected, and obscure.

When a universal artist (such as were some of the Grecian artists or the Jewish prophets) composed his work, he naturally strove to say what he had to say in such a manner that his production should be intelligible to all men. But when an artist composed for a small circle of people placed in exceptional conditions, or even for a single individual and his courtiers, — for popes, cardinals, kings, dukes, queens, or for a king's mistress, — he naturally only aimed at influencing these people, who were well known to him, and lived in exceptional conditions familiar to him. And this was an easier task, and the artist was involuntarily drawn to express himself by allusions comprehensible only to the initiated, and obscure to every one else. In the first place, more could be said in this way; and secondly, there is (for the initiated) even a certain charm in the cloudiness of such a manner of expression. This method, which showed itself both in euphemism and in mythological and historical allusions, came more and more into use, until it has, apparently, at last reached its utmost limits in the so-called art of the Decadents. It has come, finally, to this: that not only is haziness, mysteriousness, obscurity, and exclusiveness (shutting out the masses) elevated to the rank of a merit and a condition of poetic art, but even incorrectness, indefiniteness, and lack of eloquence are held in esteem.

Théophile Gautier, in his preface to the celebrated "Fleurs du Mal," says that Baudelaire, as far as possible, banished from poetry eloquence, passion, and truth too strictly copied ("*l'éloquence, la passion, et la vérité calquée trop exactement*").

And Baudelaire not only expressed this, but main-

tained his thesis in his verses, and yet more strikingly in the prose of his "Petits Poèmes en Prose," the meanings of which have to be guessed like a rebus, and remain for the most part undiscovered.

The poet Verlaine (who followed next after Baudelaire, and was also esteemed great) even wrote an "Art Poétique," in which he advises this style of composition:—

De la musique avant toute chose,
Et pour cela préfère l'Impair
Plus vague et plus soluble dans l'air,
Sans rien en lui qui pèse ou qui pose.

Il faut aussi que tu n'ailles point
Choisir tes mots sans quelque méprise:
Rien de plus cher que la chanson grise
Où l'Indécis au Précis se joint.

* * * * *

And again:—

De la musique encore et toujours!
Que ton vers soit la chose envolée
Qu'on sent qui fuit d'une âme en allée
Vers d'autres cieux à d'autres amours.

Que ton vers soit la bonne aventure
Eparse au vent crispé du matin,
Qui va fleurant la menthe et le thym ....
Et tout le reste est littérature.[1]

[1] Music, music before all things
The eccentric still prefer,
Vague in air, and nothing weighty,
Soluble. Yet do not err,

Choosing words; still do it lightly,
Do it too with some contempt;
Dearest is the song that's tipsy,
Clearness, dimness not exempt.

* * * * *

After these two comes Mallarmé, considered the most important of the young poets, and he plainly says that the charm of poetry lies in our having to guess its meaning — that in poetry there should always be a puzzle: —

Je pense qu'il faut qu'il n'y ait qu'allusion, says he. *La contemplation des objets, l'image s'envolant des rêveries suscitées par eux, sont le chant: les Parnassiens, eux, prennent la chose entièrement et la montrent; par là ils manquent de mystère; ils retirent aux esprits cette joie délicieuse de croire qu'ils créent.* Nommer un objet, c'est supprimer les trois quarts de la jouissance du poème, qui est faite du bonheur de deviner peu à peu: le suggérer, voilà le rêve. *C'est le parfait usage de ce mystère qui constitue le symbole: évoquer petit à petit un objet pour montrer un état d'âme, ou, inversement, choisir un objet et en dégager un état d'âme, par une sèrie de déchiffrements.*

.... *Si un être d'une intelligence moyenne, et d'une préparation littéraire insuffisante, ouvre par hasard un livre ainsi fait et prétend en jouir, il y a malentendu, il faut remettre les choses à leur place.* Il doit y avoir toujours énigme en poèsie, *et c'est le but de la littérature, il n'y en a pas d'autre, — d'évoquer les objets.* — " Enquête sur l'Évolution Littéraire," Jules Huret, pp. 60, 61.[1]

Music always, now and ever
Be thy verse the thing that flies
From a soul that 's gone, escaping,
Gone to other loves and skies.

Gone to other loves and regions,
Following fortunes that allure,
Mint and thyme and morning crispness ....
All the rest 's mere literature.

[1] I think there should be nothing but allusions. The contemplation of objects, the flying image of reveries evoked by them, are the song. The Parnassiens state the thing completely, and show it, and thereby lack mystery; they deprive the mind of that delicious joy of imagining that it creates. To *name an object is to take three-quarters from the enjoyment of the poem, which consists in the happiness of guessing little by little: to suggest, that is the dream.* It is the perfect use of this mystery that constitutes the symbol: little by little, to evoke an object in order to show a

Thus is obscurity elevated into a dogma among the new poets. As the French critic Doumic (who has not yet accepted the dogma) quite correctly says: —

"*Il serait temps aussi d'en finir avec cette fameuse 'théorie de l'obscurite' que la nouvelle école a élevée, en effet, à la hauteur d'un dogme.*" — "Les Jeunes, par René Doumic."[1]

But it is not French writers only who think thus. The poets of all other countries think and act in the same way: German, and Scandinavian, and Italian, and Russian, and English. So also do the artists of the new period in all branches of art: in painting, in sculpture, and in music. Relying on Nietzsche and Wagner, the artists of the new age conclude that it is unnecessary for them to be intelligible to the vulgar crowd; it is enough for them to evoke poetic emotion in "the finest nurtured," to borrow a phrase from an English æsthetician.

In order that what I am saying may not seem to be mere assertion, I will quote at least a few examples from the French poets who have led this movement. The name of these poets is legion. I have taken French writers, because they, more decidedly than any others, indicate the new direction of art, and are imitated by most European writers.

Besides those whose names are already considered famous, such as Baudelaire and Verlaine, here are the names of a few of them: Jean Moréas, Charles Morice, Henri de Régnier, Charles Vignier, Adrien Remacle, René Ghil, Maurice Maeterlinck, G. Albert Aurier, Rémy de Gourmont, Saint-Pol-Roux-le-Magnifique, Georges Rodenbach, le comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac.

state of the soul; or, inversely, to choose an object, and from it to disengage a state of the soul by a series of decipherings.

.... If a being of mediocre intelligence and insufficient literary preparation chance to open a book made in this way and pretends to enjoy it, there is a misunderstanding — things must be returned to their places. *There should always be an enigma in poetry*, and the aim of literature — it has no other — is to evoke objects.

[1] It were time also to have done with this famous "theory of obscurity," which the new school have practically raised to the height of a dogma.

These are Symbolists and Decadents. Next we have the "Magi": Joséphin Péladan, Paul Adam, Jules Bois, M. Papus, and others.

Besides these, there are yet one hundred and forty-one others, whom Doumic mentions in the book referred to above.

Here are some examples from the work of those of them who are considered to be the best, beginning with that most celebrated man, acknowledged to be a great artist worthy of a monument — Baudelaire. This is a poem from his celebrated "Fleurs du Mal":—

No. XXIV

Je t'adore à l'égal de la voûte nocturne,
O vase de tristesse, ô grande taciturne,
Et t'aime d'autant plus, belle, que tu me fuis,
Et que tu me parais, ornement de mes nuits,
Plus ironiquement accumuler les lieues
Qui séparent mes bras des immensités bleues.

Je m'avance à l'attaque, et je grimpe aux assauts,
Comme après un cadavre un chœur de vermisseaux,
Et je chéris, ô bête implacable et cruelle,
Jusqu'à cette froideur par où tu m'es plus belle![1]

And this is another by the same writer:—

No. XXXVI

DUELLUM

Deux guerriers ont couru l'un sur l'autre; leurs armes
Ont éclaboussé l'air de lueurs et de sang.
Ces jeux, ces cliquetis du fer sont les vacarmes
D'une jeunesse en proie à l'amour vagissant.

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

Les glaives sont brisés! comme notre jeunesse,
Ma chère! Mais les dents, les ongles acérés,
Vengent bientôt l'épée et la dague traîtresse.
O fureur des cœurs mûrs par l'amour ulcérés!

Dans le ravin hanté des chats-pards et des onces
Nos héros, s'étreignant méchamment, ont roulé,
Et leur peau fleurira l'aridité des ronces.

Ce gouffre, c'est l'enfer, de nos amis peuplé!
Roulons-y sans remords, amazone inhumaine,
Afin d'éterniser l'ardeur de notre haine![1]

To be exact, I should mention that the collection contains verses less comprehensible than these, but not one poem which is plain and can be understood without a certain effort — an effort seldom rewarded; for the feelings which the poet transmits are evil and very low ones. And these feelings are always, and purposely, expressed by him with eccentricity and lack of clearness. This premeditated obscurity is especially noticeable in his prose, where the author could, if he liked, speak plainly.

Take, for instance, the first piece from his "Petits Poèmes":—

L'ETRANGER

Qui aimes-tu le mieux, homme énigmatique, dis? ton père, ta mère, ta sœur, ou ton frère?
Je n'ai ni père, ni mère, ni sœur, ni frère.
Tes amis?
Vous vous servez là d'une parole dont le sens m'est resté jusqu'à ce jour inconnu.
Ta patrie?
J'ignore sous quelle latitude elle est située.
La beauté?
Je l'aimerais volontiers, desse et immortelle.
L'or?
Je le hais comme vous haïssez Dieu.

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

Et qu'aimes-tu donc, extraordinaire étranger?
J'aime les nuages .... les nuages qui passent .... là bas,.... les merveilleux nuages![1]

The piece called "La Soupe et les Nuages" is probably intended to express the unintelligibility of the poet even to her whom he loves. This is the piece in question: —

Ma petite folle bien-aimée me donnait à dîner, et par la fenêtre ouverte de la salle à manger je contemplais les mouvantes architectures que Dieu fait avec les vapeurs, les merveilleuses constructions de l'impalpable. Et je me disais, à travers ma contemplation: "Toutes ces fantasmagories sont presque aussi belles que les yeux de ma belle bien-aimée, la petite folle monstrueuse aux yeux verts."
Et tout à coup je reçus un violent coup de poing dans le dos, et j'entendis une voix rauque et charmante, une voix hystérique et comme enrouée par l'eau-de-vie, la voix de ma chère petite bien-aimée, qui me disait, "Allez-vous bientôt manger votre soupe, s .... b .... de marchand de nuages?"[1]

However artificial these two pieces may be, it is still possible, with some effort, to guess at what the author meant them to express, but some of the pieces are absolutely incomprehensible — at least to me. "Le Galant Tireur" is a piece I was quite unable to understand.

LE GALANT TIREUR

Comme la voiture traversait le bois, il la fit arrêter dans le voisinage d'un tir, disant qu'il lui serait agréable de tirer quelques balles pour tuer le Temps. Tuer ce monstre-là, n'est-ce pas l'occupation la plus ordinaire et la plus légitime de chacun? — Et il offrit galamment la main à sa chère, délicieuse et exécrable femme, à cette mystérieuse femme à laquelle il doit tant de plaisirs, tant de douleurs, et peut-être aussi une grande partie de son génie.

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

Plusieurs balles frappèrent loin du but proposé, l'une d'elles s'enfonça même dans le plafond; et comme la charmante créature riait follement, se moquant de la maladresse de son époux, celui-ci se tourna brusquement vers elle, et lui dit: "Observez cette poupée, là-bas, à droite, qui porte le nez en l'air et qui a la mine si hautaine. Eh bien! cher ange, je me figure que c'est vous." *Et il ferma les yeux et il lâcha la détente. La poupée fut nettement décapitée.*

Alors s' inclinant vers sa chère, sa délicieuse, son exécrable femme, son inévitable et impitoyable Muse, et lui baisant respectueusement la main, il ajouta: "Ah! mon cher ange, combien je vous remercie de mon adresse!" [1]

The productions of another celebrity, Verlaine, are not less affected and unintelligible. This, for instance, is the first poem in the section called "Ariettes Oubliés."

"*Le vent dans la plaine*
Suspend son haleine." — FAVART.

C'est l'extase langoureuse,
C'est la fatigue amoureuse,
C'est tous les frissons des bois
Parmi l'étreinte des brises,
C'est, vers les ramures grises,
Le chœur des petites voix.

O le frêle et frais murmure!
Cela gazouille et susurre,
Cela ressemble au cri doux
Que l'herbe agitée expire....
Tu dirais, sous l'eau qui vire,
Le roulis sourd des cailloux.

Cette âme qui se lamente
En cette plainte dormante
C'est la nôtre, n'est-ce pas?

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

La mienne, dis, et la tienne,
Dont s'exhale l'humble antienne
Par ce tiède soir, tout bas?[1]

What "*chœur des petites voix*"? and what "*cri doux que l'herbe agitée expire*"? and what it all means, remains altogether unintelligible to me.

And here is another "Ariette":—

VIII

Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine,
La neige incertaine
Luit comme du sable.

Le ciel est de cuivre,
Sans lueur aucune.
On croirait voir vivre
Et mourir la lune.

Comme des nuées
Flottent gris les chênes
Des forêts prochaines
Parmi les buées.

Le ciel est de cuivre,
Sans lueur aucune.
On croirait voir vivre
Et mourir la lune.

Corneille poussive
Et vous, les loups maigres,
Par ces bises aigres
Quoi donc vous arrive?

Dans l'interminable
Ennui de la plaine,

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

La neige incertaine
Luit comme du sable.[1]

How does the moon seem to live and die in a copper heaven? And how can snow shine like sand? The whole thing is not merely unintelligible, but, under pretense of conveying an impression, it passes off a string of incorrect comparisons and words.

Besides these artificial and obscure poems there are others which are intelligible, but which make up for it by being altogether bad, both in form and in subject. Such are all the poems under the heading "La Sagesse." The chief place in these verses is occupied by a very poor expression of the most commonplace Roman Catholic and patriotic sentiments. For instance, one meets with verses such as this: —

Je ne veux plus penser qu'à ma mère Marie,
Siège de la sagesse et source de pardons,
Mère de France aussi de qui nous attendons
Inébranlablement l'honneur de la patrie.[2]

Before citing examples from other poets, I must pause to note the amazing celebrity of these two versifiers, Baudelaire and Verlaine, who are now accepted as being great poets. How the French, who had Chénier, Musset, Lamartine, and, above all, Hugo, — and among whom quite recently flourished the so-called Parnassiens: Leconte de Lisle, Sully-Prudhomme, etc., — could attribute such importance to these two versifiers, who were far from skilful in form and most contemptible and commonplace in subject-matter, is to me incomprehensible. The conception of life of one of them, Baudelaire, consisted in elevating gross egotism into a theory, and replacing morality by a cloudy conception of beauty, and

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

[2] I do not wish to think any more, except about my mother Mary,
Seat of wisdom and source of pardon,
Also Mother of France, *from whom we*
Steadfastly expect the honor of our country.

especially artificial beauty. Baudelaire had a preference, which he expressed, for a woman's face painted rather than showing its natural color, and for metal trees and a theatrical imitation of water rather than real trees and real water.

The life-conception of the other, Verlaine, consisted in weak profligacy, confession of his moral impotence, and, as an antidote to that impotence, in the grossest Roman Catholic idolatry. Both, moreover, were quite lacking in naïveté, sincerity, and simplicity, and both overflowed with artificiality, forced originality and self-assurance. So that in their least bad productions one sees more of M. Baudelaire or M. Verlaine than of what they were describing. But these two indifferent versifiers form a school, and lead hundreds of followers after them.

There is only one explanation of this fact: it is that the art of the society in which these versifiers lived is not a serious, important matter of life, but is a mere amusement. And all amusements grow wearisome by repetition. And, in order to make wearisome amusement again tolerable, it is necessary to find some means to freshen it up. When, at cards, ombre grows stale, whist is introduced; when whist grows stale, écarté is substituted; when écarté grows stale, some other novelty is invented, and so on. The substance of the matter remains the same, only its form is changed. And so it is with this kind of art. The subject-matter of the art of the upper classes growing continually more and more limited, it has come at last to this, that to the artists of these exclusive classes it seems as if everything has already been said, and that to find anything new to say is impossible. And therefore, to freshen up this art, they look out for fresh forms.

Baudelaire and Verlaine invent such a new form, furbish it up, moreover, with hitherto unused pornographic details, and — the critics and the public of the upper classes hail them as great writers.

This is the only explanation of the success, not of Baudelaire and Verlaine only, but of all the Decadents.

For instance, there are poems by Mallarmé and Maeterlinck which have no meaning, and yet for all that, or perhaps on that very account, are printed by tens of thousands, not only in various publications, but even in collections of the best works of the younger poets.

This, for example, is a sonnet by Mallarmé:—

A la nue accablante tu
Basse de basalte et de laves
A même les échos esclaves
Par une trompe sans vertu.

Quel sépulcral naufrage (tu
Le soir, écume, mais y baves)
Suprême une entre les épaves
Abolit le mât dévêtu.

Ou cela que furibond faute
De quelque perdition haute
Tout l'abîme vain éployé
Dans le si blanc cheveu qui traîne
Avarement aura noyé
Le flanc enfant d'une sirène.[1]

("Pan," 1895, No. 1.)

This poem is not exceptional in its incomprehensibility. I have read several poems by Mallarmé, and they also had no meaning whatever. I give a sample of his prose in Appendix I. There is a whole volume of this prose called "Divagations." It is impossible to understand any of it. And that is evidently what the author intended.

And here is a song by Maeterlinck, another celebrated author of to-day:—

Quand il est sorti,
(J'entendis la porte)

[1] This sonnet seems too unintelligible for translation.—Tr.

Quand il est sorti
Elle avait souri ....

Mais quand il entra
(J'entendis la lampe)
Mais quand il entra
Une autre était là ....

Et j'ai vu la mort,
(J'entendis son âme)
Et j'ai vu la mort
Qui l'attend encore ....

On est venu dire,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
On est venu dire
Qu'il allait partir ....

Ma lampe allumée,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
Ma lampe allumée
Me suis approchée ....

A la première porte,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
A la première porte,
La flamme a tremblé ....

A la seconde porte,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
A la seconde porte,
La flamme a parlé ....

A la troisième porte,
(Mon enfant j'ai peur)
A la troisième porte,
La lumière est morte ....

Et s'il revenait un jour
Que faut-il lui dire?

Dites-lui qu'on l'attendit
Jusqu'à s'en mourir....

Et s'il demande où vous êtes
Que faut-il répondre?
Donnez-lui mon anneau d'or
Sans rien lui répondre....

Et s'il m'interroge alors
Sur la dernière heure?
Dites lui que j'ai souri
De peur qu'il ne pleure....

Et s'il m'interroge encore
Sans me reconnaître?
Parlez-lui comme une sœur,
Il souffre peut-être....

Et s'il veut savoir pourquoi
La salle est déserte?
Montrez lui la lampe éteinte
Et la porte ouverte....[1]

("Pan," 1895, No. 2.)

Who went out? Who came in? Who is speaking? Who died?

I beg the reader to be at the pains of reading through the samples I cite in Appendix II. of the celebrated and esteemed young poets — Griffin, Verhaeren, Moréas, and Montesquiou. It is important to do so in order to form a clear conception of the present position of art, and not to suppose, as many do, that Decadentism is an accidental and transitory phenomenon. To avoid the reproach of having selected the worst verses, I have copied out of each volume the poem which happened to stand on page 28.

All the other productions of these poets are equally unintelligible, or can only be understood with great

[1] For translation, see Appendix IV.

difficulty, and then not fully. All the productions of those hundreds of poets, of whom I have named a few, are the same in kind. And among the Germans, Swedes, Norwegians, Italians, and us Russians, similar verses are printed. And such productions are printed and made up into book form, if not by the million, then by the hundred thousand (some of these works sell in tens of thousands). For type-setting, paging, printing, and binding these books, millions and millions of working days are spent — not less, I think, than went to build the great pyramid. And this is not all. The same is going on in all the other arts: millions and millions of working days are being spent on the production of equally incomprehensible works in painting, in music, and in the drama.

Painting not only does not lag behind poetry in this matter, but rather outstrips it. Here is an extract from the diary of an amateur of art, written when visiting the Paris exhibitions in 1894: —

"I was to-day at three exhibitions: the Symbolists', the Impressionists', and the Neo-Impressionists'. I looked at the pictures conscientiously and carefully, but again felt the same stupefaction and ultimate indignation. The first exhibition, that of Camille Pissarro, was comparatively the most comprehensible, though the pictures were out of drawing, had no subject, and the colorings were most improbable. The drawing was so indefinite that you were sometimes unable to make out which way an arm or a head was turned. The subject was generally '*effets*' — *Effet de brouillard*, *Effet du soir*, *Soleil couchant*. There were some pictures with figures, but without subjects.

"In the coloring, bright blue and bright green predominated. And each picture had its special color, with which the whole picture was, as it were, splashed. For instance, in 'A Girl Guarding Geese,' the special color is *vert de gris*, and dots of it were splashed about everywhere; on the face, the hair, the hands, and the clothes. In the same gallery — 'Durand Ruel' — were other pictures by Puvis de Chavannes, Manet, Monet, Renoir,

Sisley — who are all Impressionists. One of them, whose name I could not make out, — it was something like Redon, — had painted a blue face in profile. On the whole face there is only this blue tone, with white-of-lead. Pissarro has a water-color all done in dots. In the foreground is a cow, entirely painted with various-colored dots. The general color cannot be distinguished, however much one stands back from, or draws near to, the picture. From there I went to see the Symbolists. I looked at them long without asking any one for an explanation, trying to guess the meaning; but it is beyond human comprehension. One of the first things to catch my eye was a wooden *haut-relief*, wretchedly executed, representing a woman (naked) who with both hands is squeezing from her two breasts streams of blood. The blood flows down, becoming lilac in color. Her hair first descends, and then rises again, and turns into trees. The figure is all colored yellow, and the hair is brown.

"Next — a picture: a yellow sea, on which swims something which is neither a ship nor a heart; on the horizon is a profile with a halo and yellow hair, which changes into a sea, in which it is lost. Some of the painters lay on their colors so thickly that the effect is something between painting and sculpture. A third exhibit was even less comprehensible: a man's profile; before him a flame and black stripes — leeches, as I was afterwards told. At last I asked a gentleman who was there what it meant, and he explained to me that the *haut-relief* was a symbol, and that it represented '*La Terre.*' The heart swimming in a yellow sea was '*Illusion perdue*,' and the gentleman with the leeches '*Le Mal.*' There were also some Impressionist pictures: elementary profiles, holding some sort of flowers in their hands: in monotone, out of drawing, and either quite blurred or else marked out with wide black outlines."

This was in 1894; the same tendency is now even more strongly defined, and we have Böcklin, Stuck, Klinger, Sasha Schneider, and others.

The same thing is taking place in the drama. The play-writers give us an architect who, for some reason, has not fulfilled his former high intentions, and who consequently climbs on to the roof of a house he has erected, and tumbles down head foremost; or an incomprehensible old woman (who exterminates rats), and who, for an unintelligible reason, takes a poetic child to the sea, and there drowns him; or some blind men who, sitting on the seashore, for some reason always repeat one and the same thing; or a bell of some kind, which flies into a lake, and there rings.

And the same is happening in music — in that art which, more than any other, one would have thought, should be intelligible to everybody.

An acquaintance of yours, a musician of repute, sits down to the piano and plays you what he says is a new composition of his own, or of one of the new composers. You hear the strange, loud sounds, and admire the gymnastic exercises performed by his fingers; and you see that the performer wishes to impress upon you that the sounds he is producing express various poetic strivings of the soul. You see his intention, but no feeling whatever is transmitted to you except weariness. The execution lasts long, or at least it seems very long to you, because you do not receive any clear impression, and involuntarily you remember the words of Alphonse Karr, "*Plus ça va vite, plus ça dure longtemps.*" [1] And it occurs to you that perhaps it is all a mystification; perhaps the performer is trying you — just throwing his hands and fingers wildly about the keyboard in the hope that you will fall into the trap and praise him, and then he will laugh and confess that he only wanted to see if he could hoax you. But when at last the piece does finish, and the perspiring and agitated musician rises from the piano evidently anticipating praise, you see that it was all done in earnest.

The same thing takes place at all the concerts, with pieces by Liszt, Wagner, Berlioz, Brahms, and (newest of all) Richard Strauss, and the numberless other com-

[1] The quicker it goes the longer it lasts.

posers of the new school, who unceasingly produce opera after opera, symphony after symphony, piece after piece.

The same is occurring in a domain in which it seemed hard to be unintelligible, — in the sphere of novels and short stories.

Read "Là Bas," by Huysmans, or some of Kipling's short stories, or "L'Annonciateur," by Villiers de l'Isle Adam in his "Contes Cruels," etc., and you will find them not only "abscons" (to use a word adopted by the new writers), but absolutely unintelligible both in form and in substance. Such, again, is the work by E. Morel, "Terre Promise," now appearing in the *Revue Blanche*, and such are most of the new novels. The style is very high-flown, the feelings seem to be most elevated, but you can't make out what is happening, to whom it is happening, and where it is happening. And such is the bulk of the young art of our time.

People who grew up in the first half of this century, admiring Goethe, Schiller, Musset, Hugo, Dickens, Beethoven, Chopin, Raphael, da Vinci, Michael Angelo, Delaroche, being unable to make head or tail of this new art, simply attribute its productions to tasteless insanity, and wish to ignore them. But such an attitude toward this new art is quite unjustifiable, because, in the first place, that art is spreading more and more, and has already conquered for itself a firm position in society, similar to the one occupied by the Romanticists in the third decade of this century; and, secondly and chiefly, because, if it is permissible to judge in this way of the productions of the latest form of art, called by us Decadent art, merely because we do not understand it, then remember there are an enormous number of people, — all the laborers, and many of the non-laboring folk, — who, in just the same way, do not comprehend those productions of art which we consider admirable: the verses of our favorite artists — Goethe, Schiller, and Hugo; the novels of Dickens, the music of Beethoven and Chopin, the pictures of Raphael, Michael Angelo, da Vinci, etc.

If I have a right to think that great masses of people do not understand and do not like what I consider undoubtedly good because they are not sufficiently developed, then I have no right to deny that perhaps the reason why I cannot understand and cannot like the new productions of art is merely that I am still insufficiently developed to understand them. If I have a right to say that I, and the majority of people who are in sympathy with me, do not understand the productions of the new art, simply because there is nothing in it to understand, and because it is bad art, then, with just the same right, the still larger majority, the whole laboring mass, who do not understand what I consider admirable art, can say that what I reckon as good art is bad art, and there is nothing in it to understand.

I once saw the injustice of such condemnation of the new art with especial clearness, when, in my presence, a certain poet, who writes incomprehensible verses, ridiculed incomprehensible music with gay self-assurance; and, shortly afterwards, a certain musician, who composes incomprehensible symphonies, laughed at incomprehensible poetry with equal self-confidence. I have no right, and no authority, to condemn the new art on the ground that I (a man educated in the first half of the century) do not understand it; I can only say that it is incomprehensible to me. The only advantage the art I acknowledge has over the Decadent art, lies in the fact that the art I recognize is comprehensible to a somewhat larger number of people than the present-day art.

The fact that I am accustomed to a certain exclusive art, and can understand it, but am unable to understand another still more exclusive art, does not give me a right to conclude that my art is the real true art, and that the other one, which I do not understand, is an unreal, a bad art. I can only conclude that art, becoming ever more and more exclusive, has become more and more incomprehensible to an ever increasing number of people, and that, in this its progress toward greater and greater incomprehensibility (on one

level of which I am standing, with the art familiar to me), it has reached a point where it is understood by a very small number of the elect, and the number of these chosen people is ever becoming smaller and smaller.

As soon as ever the art of the upper classes separated itself from universal art, a conviction arose that art may be art and yet be incomprehensible to the masses. And as soon as this position was admitted, it had inevitably to be admitted also that art may be intelligible only to the very smallest number of the elect, and, eventually, to two, or to one, of our nearest friends, or to oneself alone. Which is practically what is being said by modern artists: "I create and understand myself, and if any one does not understand me, so much the worse for him."

The assertion that art may be good art, and at the same time incomprehensible to a great number of people, is extremely unjust, and its consequences are ruinous to art itself; but at the same time it is so common and has so eaten into our conceptions, that it is impossible sufficiently to elucidate all the absurdity of it.

Nothing is more common than to hear it said of reputed works of art, that they are very good but very difficult to understand. We are quite used to such assertions, and yet to say that a work of art is good, but incomprehensible to the majority of men, is the same as saying of some kind of food that it is very good, but that most people can't eat it. The majority of men may not like rotten cheese or putrefying grouse — dishes esteemed by people with perverted tastes; but bread and fruit are only good when they please the majority of men. And it is the same with art. Perverted art may not please the majority of men, but good art always pleases every one.

It is said that the very best works of art are such that they cannot be understood by the mass, but are accessible only to the elect who are prepared to understand these great works. But if the majority of men

do not understand, the knowledge necessary to enable them to understand should be taught and explained to them. But it turns out that there is no such knowledge, that the works cannot be explained, and that those who say the majority do not understand good works of art, still do not explain those works, but only tell us that, in order to understand them, one must read, and see, and hear these same works over and over again. But this is not to explain, it is only to habituate! And people may habituate themselves to anything, even to the very worst things. As people may habituate themselves to bad food, to spirits, tobacco, and opium, just in the same way they may habituate themselves to bad art — and that is exactly what is being done.

Moreover, it cannot be said that the majority of people lack the taste to esteem the highest works of art. The majority always have understood, and still understand, what we also recognize as being the very best art: the epic of Genesis, the gospel parables, folk-legends, fairy-tales, and folk-songs, are understood by all. How can it be that the majority has suddenly lost its capacity to understand what is high in our art?

Of a speech it may be said that it is admirable, but incomprehensible to those who do not know the language in which it is delivered. A speech delivered in Chinese may be excellent, and may yet remain incomprehensible to me if I do not know Chinese; but what distinguishes a work of art from all other mental activity is just the fact that its language is understood by all, and that it infects all without distinction. The tears and laughter of a Chinese infect me just as the laughter and tears of a Russian; and it is the same with painting and music and poetry, when it is translated into a language I understand. The songs of a Kirghiz or of a Japanese touch me, though in a lesser degree than they touch a Kirghiz or a Japanese. I am also touched by Japanese painting, Indian architecture, and Arabian stories. If I am but little touched

by a Japanese song and a Chinese novel, it is not that I do not understand these productions, but that I know and am accustomed to higher works of art. It is not because their art is above me. Great works of art are only great because they are accessible and comprehensible to every one. The story of Joseph, translated into the Chinese language, touches a Chinese. The story of Sakya Muni touches us. And there are, and must be, buildings, pictures, statues, and music of similar power. So that, if art fails to move men, it cannot be said that this is due to the spectators' or hearers' lack of understanding; but the conclusion to be drawn may and should be, that such art is either bad art, or is not art at all.

Art is differentiated from activity of the understanding, which demands preparation and a certain sequence of knowledge (so that one cannot learn trigonometry before knowing geometry), by the fact that it acts on people independently of their state of development and education, that the charm of a picture, sounds, or of forms, infects any man whatever his plane of development.

The business of art lies just in this, — to make that understood and felt which, in the form of an argument, might be incomprehensible and inaccessible. Usually it seems to the recipient of a truly artistic impression that he knew the thing before but had been unable to express it.

And such has always been the nature of good, supreme art; the "Iliad," the "Odyssey," the stories of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph, the Hebrew prophets, the psalms, the gospel parables, the story of Sakya Muni, and the hymns of the Vedas: all transmit very elevated feelings, and are nevertheless quite comprehensible now to us, educated or uneducated, as they were comprehensible to the men of those times, long ago, who were even less educated than our laborers. People talk about incomprehensibility; but if art is the transmission of feelings flowing from man's religious perception, how can a feeling be incomprehensible

which is founded on religion, *i.e.* on man's relation to God? Such art should be, and has actually always been, comprehensible to everybody, because every man's relation to God is one and the same. And therefore the churches and the images in them were always comprehensible to every one. The hindrance to understanding the best and highest feelings (as is said in the gospel) does not at all lie in deficiency of development or learning, but, on the contrary, in false development and false learning. A good and lofty work of art may be incomprehensible, but not to simple, unperverted peasant laborers (all that is highest is understood by them) — it may be, and often is, unintelligible to erudite, perverted people destitute of religion. And this continually occurs in our society, in which the highest feelings are simply not understood. For instance, I know people who consider themselves most refined, and who say that they do not understand the poetry of love to one's neighbor, of self-sacrifice, or of chastity.

So that good, great, universal, religious art may be incomprehensible to a small circle of spoilt people, but certainly not to any large number of plain men.

Art cannot be incomprehensible to the great masses only because it is very good — as artists of our day are fond of telling us. Rather we are bound to conclude that this art is unintelligible to the great masses only because it is very bad art, or even is not art at all. So that the favorite argument (naïvely accepted by the cultured crowd), that in order to feel art one has first to understand it (which really only means habituate oneself to it), is the truest indication that what we are asked to understand by such a method is either very bad, exclusive art, or is not art at all.

People say that works of art do not please the people because they are incapable of understanding them. But if the aim of works of art is to infect people with the emotion the artist has experienced, how can one talk about not understanding?

A man of the people reads a book, sees a picture,

hears a play or a symphony, and is touched by no feeling. He is told that this is because he cannot understand. People promise to let a man see a certain show; he enters and sees nothing. He is told that this is because his sight is not prepared for this show. But the man well knows that he sees quite well, and if he does not see what people promised to show him, he only concludes (as is quite just) that those who undertook to show him the spectacle have not fulfilled their engagement. And it is perfectly just for a man who does feel the influence of some works of art to come to this conclusion concerning artists who do not, by their works, evoke feeling in him. To say that the reason a man is not touched by my art is because he is still too stupid, besides being very self-conceited and also rude, is to reverse the rôles, and for the sick to send the hale to bed.

Voltaire said that "*Tous les genres sont bons, hors le genre ennuyeux;*"[1] but with even more right one may say of art that *Tous les genres sont bons, hors celui qu'on ne comprend pas*, or *qui ne produit pas son effet*,[2] for of what value is an article which fails to do that for which it was intended?

Mark this above all: if only it be admitted that art may be art and yet be unintelligible to any one of sound mind, there is no reason why any circle of perverted people should not compose works tickling their own perverted feelings and comprehensible to no one but themselves, and call it "art," as is actually being done by the so-called Decadents.

The direction art has taken may be compared to placing on a large circle other circles, smaller and smaller, until a cone is formed, the apex of which is no longer a circle at all. That is what has happened to the art of our times.

[1] All styles are good except the wearisome style.

[2] All styles are good except that which is not understood, *or* which fails to produce its effect.

CHAPTER XI

Becoming ever poorer and poorer in subject-matter, and more and more unintelligible in form, the art of the upper classes, in its latest productions, has even lost all the characteristics of art, and has been replaced by imitations of art. Not only has upper-class art, in consequence of its separation from universal art, become poor in subject-matter, and bad in form, *i.e.* ever more and more unintelligible, it has, in course of time, ceased even to be art at all, and has been replaced by counterfeits.

This has resulted from the following causes: Universal art arises only when some one of the people, having experienced a strong emotion, feels the necessity of transmitting it to others. The art of the rich classes, on the other hand, arises not from the artist's inner impulse, but chiefly because people of the upper classes demand amusement and pay well for it. They demand from art the transmission of feelings that please them, and this demand artists try to meet. But it is a very difficult task; for people of the wealthy classes, spending their lives in idleness and luxury, desire to be continually diverted by art; and art, even the lowest, cannot be produced at will, but has to generate spontaneously in the artist's inner self. And therefore, to satisfy the demands of people of the upper classes, artists have had to devise methods of producing imitations of art. And such methods have been devised.

These methods are those of (1) borrowing, (2) imitating, (3) striking (effects), and (4) interesting.

The first method consists in borrowing whole subjects, or merely separate features, from former works recognized by every one as being poetical, and in so re-shaping them, with sundry additions, that they should have an appearance of novelty.

Such works, evoking in people of a certain class memories of artistic feelings formerly experienced, produce an impression similar to art, and, provided

only that they conform to other needful conditions, they pass for art among those who seek for pleasure from art. Subjects borrowed from previous works of art are usually called poetical subjects. Objects and people thus borrowed are called poetical objects and people. Thus, in our circle, all sorts of legends, sagas, and ancient traditions are considered poetical subjects. Among poetical people and objects we reckon maidens, warriors, shepherds, hermits, angels, devils of all sorts, moonlight, thunder, mountains, the sea, precipices, flowers, long hair, lions, lambs, doves, and nightingales. In general, all those objects are considered poetical which have been most frequently used by former artists in their productions.

Some forty years ago a stupid but highly cultured — *ayant beaucoup d'acquis* — lady (since deceased) asked me to listen to a novel written by herself. It began with a heroine who, in a poetic white dress, and with poetically flowing hair, was reading poetry near some water in a poetic wood. The scene was in Russia, but suddenly from behind the bushes the hero appears, wearing a hat with a feather *à la Guillaume Tell* (the book specially mentioned this) and accompanied by two poetical white dogs. The authoress deemed all this highly poetical, and it might have passed muster if only it had not been necessary for the hero to speak. But as soon as the gentleman in the hat *à la Guillaume Tell* began to converse with the maiden in the white dress, it became obvious that the authoress had nothing to say, but had merely been moved by poetic memories of other works, and imagined that by ringing the changes on those memories she could produce an artistic impression. But an artistic impression, *i.e.* infection, is only received when an author has, in the manner peculiar to himself, experienced the feeling which he transmits, and not when he passes on another man's feeling previously transmitted to him. Such poetry from poetry cannot infect people, it can only simulate a work of art, and even that only to people of perverted æsthetic taste. The lady in question being very stupid and devoid of

talent, it was at once apparent how the case stood; but when such borrowing is resorted to by people who are erudite and talented and have cultivated the technique of their art, we get those borrowings from the Greek, the antique, the Christian or mythological world which have become so numerous, and which, particularly in our day, continue to increase and multiply, and are accepted by the public as works of art, if only the borrowings are well mounted by means of the technique of the particular art to which they belong.

As a characteristic example of such counterfeits of art in the realm of poetry, take Rostand's "Princesse Lointaine," in which there is not a spark of art, but which seems very poetical to many people, and probably also to its author.

The second method of imparting a semblance of art is that which I have called imitating. The essence of this method consists in supplying details accompanying the thing described or depicted. In literary art this method consists in describing, in the minutest details, the external appearance, the faces, the clothes, the gestures, the tones, and the habitations of the characters represented, with all the occurrences met with in life. For instance, in novels and stories, when one of the characters speaks, we are told in what voice he spoke, and what he was doing at the time. And the things said are not given so that they should have as much sense as possible, but, as they are in life, disconnectedly, and with interruptions and omissions. In dramatic art, besides such imitation of real speech, this method consists in having all the accessories and all the people just like those in real life. In painting, this method assimilates painting to photography, and destroys the difference between them. And, strange to say, this method is used also in music: music tries to imitate, not only by its rhythm but also by its very sounds, the sounds which in real life accompany the thing it wishes to represent.

The third method is by action, often purely physical, on the outer senses. Work of this kind is said to be "striking," "effectful." In all arts these effects con-

sist chiefly in contrasts; in bringing together the terrible and the tender, the beautiful and the hideous, the loud and the soft, darkness and light, the most ordinary and the most extraordinary. In verbal art, besides effects of contrast, there are also effects consisting in the description of things that have never before been described. These are usually pornographic details evoking sexual desire, or details of suffering and death evoking feelings of horror, as, for instance, when describing a murder, to give a detailed medical account of the lacerated tissues, of the swellings, of the smell, quantity, and appearance of the blood. It is the same in painting: besides all kinds of other contrasts, one is coming into vogue which consists in giving careful finish to one object and being careless about all the rest. The chief and usual effects in painting are effects of light and the depiction of the horrible. In the drama, the most common effects, besides contrasts, are tempests, thunder, moonlight, scenes at sea or by the seashore, changes of costume, exposure of the female body, madness, murders, and death generally: the dying person exhibiting in detail all the phases of agony. In music the most usual effects are a *crescendo*, passing from the softest and simplest sounds to the loudest and most complex crash of the full orchestra; a repetition of the same sounds *arpeggio* in all the octaves and on various instruments; or that the harmony, tone, and rhythm be not at all those naturally flowing from the course of the musical thought, but such as strike one by their unexpectedness. Besides these, the commonest effects in music are produced in a purely physical manner by strength of sound, especially in an orchestra.

Such are some of the most usual effects in the various arts, but there yet remains one common to them all; namely, to convey by means of one art what it would be natural to convey by another: for instance, to make music describe (as is done by the programme music of Wagner and his followers), or to make painting, the drama, or poetry, induce a frame of mind (as is aimed at by all the Decadent art).

The fourth method is that of interesting (that is, absorbing the mind) in connection with works of art. The interest may lie in an intricate plot — a method till quite recently much employed in English novels and French plays, but now going out of fashion and being replaced by authenticity, *i.e.* by detailed description of some historical period or some branch of contemporary life. For example, in a novel, interestingness may consist in a description of Egyptian or Roman life, the life of miners, or that of the clerks in a large shop. The reader becomes interested and mistakes this interest for an artistic impression. The interest may also depend on the very method of expression; a kind of interest that has now come much into use. Both verse and prose, as well as pictures, plays, and music, are constructed so that they must be guessed like riddles, and this process of guessing again affords pleasure and gives a semblance of the feeling received from art.

It is very often said that a work of art is very good because it is poetic, or realistic, or striking, or interesting; whereas not only can neither the first, nor the second, nor the third, nor the fourth of these attributes supply a standard of excellence in art, but they have not even anything in common with art.

Poetic — means borrowed. All borrowing merely recalls to the reader, spectator, or listener some dim recollection of artistic impressions they have received from previous works of art, and does not infect them with feeling which the artist has himself experienced. A work founded on something borrowed, like Goethe's "Faust," for instance, may be very well executed and be full of mind and every beauty, but because it lacks the chief characteristic of a work of art — completeness, oneness, the inseparable unity of form and contents expressing the feeling the artist has experienced — it cannot produce a really artistic impression. In availing himself of this method, the artist only transmits the feeling received by him from a previous work of art; therefore every borrowing, whether it be of whole subjects, or of various scenes, situations, or descriptions, is

but a reflection of art, a simulation of it, but not art itself. And therefore, to say that a certain production is good because it is poetic — *i.e.* resembles a work of art — is like saying of a coin that it is good because it resembles real money.

Equally little can imitation, realism, serve, as many people think, as a measure of the quality of art. Imitation cannot be such a measure; for the chief characteristic of art is the infection of others with the feelings the artist has experienced, and infection with a feeling is not only not identical with description of the accessories of what is transmitted, but is usually hindered by superfluous details. The attention of the receiver of the artistic impression is diverted by all these well-observed details, and they hinder the transmission of feeling even when it exists.

To value a work of art by the degree of its realism, by the accuracy of the details reproduced, is as strange as to judge of the nutritive quality of food by its external appearance. When we appraise a work according to its realism, we only show that we are talking, not of a work of art, but of its counterfeit.

Neither does the third method of imitating art — by the use of what is striking or effectual — coincide with real art any better than the two former methods; for in effectfulness — the effects of novelty, of the unexpected, of contrasts, of the horrible — there is no transmission of feeling, but only an action on the nerves. If an artist were to paint a bloody wound admirably, the sight of the wound would strike me, but it would not be art. One prolonged note on a powerful organ will produce a striking impression, will often even cause tears, but there is no music in it, because no feeling is transmitted. Yet such physiological effects are constantly mistaken for art by people of our circle, and this not only in music, but also in poetry, painting, and the drama. It is said that art has become refined. On the contrary, thanks to the pursuit of effectfulness, it has become very coarse. A new piece is brought out and accepted all over Europe, such, for instance, as "Hannele," in

which play the author wishes to transmit to the spectators pity for a persecuted girl. To evoke this feeling in the audience by means of art, the author should either make one of the characters express this pity in such a way as to infect every one, or he should describe the girl's feelings correctly. But he cannot, or will not, do this, and chooses another way, more complicated in stage management, but easier for the author. He makes the girl die on the stage; and, still further to increase the physiological effect on the spectators, he extinguishes the lights in the theater, leaving the audience in the dark, and to the sound of dismal music he shows how the girl is pursued and beaten by her drunken father. The girl shrinks — screams — groans — and falls. Angels appear and carry her away. And the audience, experiencing some excitement while this is going on, are fully convinced that this is true æsthetic feeling. But there is nothing æsthetic in such excitement; for there is no infecting of man by man, but only a mingled feeling of pity for another, and of self-congratulation that it is not I who am suffering: it is like what we feel at the sight of an execution, or what the Romans felt in their circuses.

The substitution of effectfulness for æsthetic feeling is particularly noticeable in musical art — that art which by its nature has an immediate physiological action on the nerves. Instead of transmitting by means of a melody the feelings he has experienced, a composer of the new school accumulates and complicates sounds, and by now strengthening, now weakening them, he produces on the audience a physiological effect of a kind that can be measured by an apparatus invented for the purpose.[1] And the public mistake this physiological effect for the effect of art.

As to the fourth method — that of interesting — it also is frequently confounded with art. One often hears it said, not only of a poem, a novel, or a picture, but even

[1] An apparatus exists by means of which a very sensitive arrow, in dependence on the tension of a muscle of the arm, will indicate the physiological action of music on the nerves and muscles.

of a musical work, that it is interesting. What does this mean? To speak of an interesting work of art means either that we receive from a work of art information new to us, or that the work is not fully intelligible, and that little by little, and with effort, we arrive at its meaning, and experience a certain pleasure in this process of guessing it. In neither case has the interest anything in common with artistic impression. Art aims at infecting people with feeling experienced by the artist. But the mental effort necessary to enable the spectator, listener, or reader to assimilate the new information contained in the work, or to guess the puzzles propounded, by distracting him, hinders the infection. And therefore the interestingness of a work, not only has nothing to do with its excellence as a work of art, but rather hinders than assists artistic impression.

We may, in a work of art, meet with what is poetic, and realistic, and striking, and interesting, but these things cannot replace the essential of art, — feeling experienced by the artist. Latterly, in upper-class art, most of the objects given out as being works of art are of the kind which only resemble art, and are devoid of its essential quality, — feeling experienced by the artist. And, for the diversion of the rich, such objects are continually being produced in enormous quantities by the artisans of art.

Many conditions must be fulfilled to enable a man to produce a real work of art. It is necessary that he should stand on the level of the highest life-conception of his time, that he should experience feeling and have the desire and capacity to transmit it, and that he should, moreover, have a talent for some one of the forms of art. It is very seldom that all these conditions necessary to the production of true art are combined. But in order — aided by the customary methods of borrowing, imitating, introducing effects, and interesting — unceasingly to produce counterfeits of art which pass for art in our society and are well paid for, it is only necessary to have a talent for some branch of art; and this is very often to be met with. By talent I mean

ability: in literary art, the ability to express one's thoughts and impressions easily and to notice and remember characteristic details; in the depictive arts, to distinguish and remember lines, forms, and colors; in music, to distinguish the intervals, and to remember and transmit the sequence of sounds. And a man, in our times, if only he possesses such a talent and selects some specialty, may, after learning the methods of counterfeiting used in his branch of art, — if he has patience and if his æsthetic feeling (which would render such productions revolting to him) be atrophied, — unceasingly, till the end of his life, turn out works which will pass for art in our society.

To produce such counterfeits, definite rules or recipes exist in each branch of art. So that the talented man, having assimilated them, may produce such works *à froid*, cold drawn, without any feeling.

In order to write poems a man of literary talent needs only these qualifications: to acquire the knack, conformably with the requirements of rhyme and rhythm, of using, instead of the one really suitable word, ten others meaning approximately the same; to learn how to take any phrase which, to be clear, has but one natural order of words, and despite all possible dislocations still to retain some sense in it; and lastly, to be able, guided by the words required for the rhymes, to devise some semblance of thoughts, feelings, or descriptions to suit these words. Having acquired these qualifications, he may unceasingly produce poems — short or long, religious, amatory, or patriotic, according to the demand.

If a man of literary talent wishes to write a story or novel, he need only form his style — *i.e.* learn how to describe all that he sees — and accustom himself to remember or note down details. When he has accustomed himself to this, he can, according to his inclination or the demand, unceasingly produce novels or stories — historical, naturalistic, social, erotic, psychological, or even religious, for which latter kind a demand and fashion begins to show itself. He can take

subjects from books or from the events of life, and can copy the characters of the people in his book from his acquaintances.

And such novels and stories, if only they are decked out with well-observed and carefully noted details, preferably erotic ones, will be considered works of art, even though they may not contain a spark of feeling experienced.

To produce art in dramatic form, a talented man, in addition to all that is required for novels and stories, must also learn to furnish his characters with as many smart and witty sentences as possible, must know how to utilize theatrical effects, and how to entwine the action of his characters so that there should not be any long conversations, but as much bustle and movement on the stage as possible. If the writer is able to do this, he may produce dramatic works one after another without stopping, selecting his subjects from the reports of the law courts, or from the latest society topic, such as hypnotism, heredity, etc., or from deep antiquity, or even from the realms of fancy.

In the sphere of painting and sculpture it is still easier for the talented man to produce imitations of art. He need only learn to draw, paint, and model — especially naked bodies. Thus equipped he can continue to paint pictures, or model statues, one after another, choosing subjects according to his bent — mythological, or religious, or fantastic, or symbolical; or he may depict what is written about in the papers — a coronation, a strike, the Turko-Grecian war, famine scenes; or, commonest of all, he may just copy anything he thinks beautiful — from naked women to copper basins.

For the production of musical art the talented man needs still less of what constitutes the essence of art, *i.e.* feeling wherewith to infect others: but on the other hand, he requires more physical, gymnastic labor than for any other art, unless it be dancing. To produce works of musical art, he must first learn to move his fingers on some instrument as rapidly as those who

have reached the highest perfection; next, he must know how in former times polyphonic music was written, must study what are called counterpoint and fugue; and, furthermore, he must learn orchestration, *i.e.* how to utilize the effects of the instruments. But once he has learned all this, the composer may unceasingly produce one work after another; whether programme-music, opera, or song (devising sounds more or less corresponding to the words), or chamber music, *i.e.* he may take another man's themes and work them up into definite forms by means of counterpoint and fugue; or, what is commonest of all, he may compose fantastic music, *i.e.* he may take a conjunction of sounds which happens to come to hand, and pile every sort of complication and ornamentation on to this chance combination.

Thus, in all realms of art, counterfeits of art are manufactured to a ready-made, prearranged recipe, and these counterfeits the public of our upper classes accept for real art.

And this substitution of counterfeits for real works of art was the third and most important consequence of the separation of the art of the upper classes from universal art.

CHAPTER XII

In our society three conditions coöperate to cause the production of objects of counterfeit art. They are — (1) the considerable remuneration of artists for their productions, and the professionalization of artists which this has produced, (2) art criticism, and (3) schools of art.

While art was as yet undivided, and only religious art was valued and rewarded while indiscriminate art was left unrewarded, there were no counterfeits of art, or, if any existed, being exposed to the criticism of the whole people, they quickly disappeared. But as soon as that division occurred, and the upper classes ac-

claimed every kind of art as good if only it afforded them pleasure, and began to reward such art more highly than any other social activity, immediately a large number of people devoted themselves to this activity, and art assumed quite a different character, and became a profession.

And as soon as this occurred, the chief and most precious quality of art — its sincerity — was at once greatly weakened and eventually quite destroyed.

The professional artist lives by his art, and has continually to invent subjects for his works, and does invent them. And it is obvious how great a difference must exist between works of art produced on the one hand by men such as the Jewish prophets, the authors of the Psalms, Francis of Assisi, the authors of the "Iliad" and "Odyssey," of folk-stories, legends, and folk-songs, many of whom not only received no remuneration for their work, but did not even attach their names to it; and, on the other hand, works produced by court poets, dramatists and musicians receiving honors and remuneration; and later on by professional artists, who lived by the trade, receiving remuneration from newspaper editors, publishers, impresarios, and in general from those agents who come between the artists and the town public — the consumers of art.

Professionalism is the first condition of the diffusion of false, counterfeit art.

The second condition is the growth, in recent times, of artistic criticism, *i.e.* the valuation of art, not by everybody, and, above all, not by plain men, but by erudite, that is, by perverted and at the same time self-confident individuals.

A friend of mine, speaking of the relation of critics to artists, half jokingly defined it thus: "Critics are the stupid who discuss the wise." However partial, inexact, and rude this definition may be, it is yet partly true, and is incomparably juster than the definition which considers critics to be men who can explain works of art.

"Critics explain!" What do they explain?

The artist, if a real artist, has by his work transmitted

to others the feeling he experienced. What is there, then, to explain?

If a work be good as art, then the feeling expressed by the artist — be it moral or immoral — transmits itself to other people. If transmitted to others, then they feel it, and all interpretations are superfluous. If the work does not infect people, no explanation can make it contagious. An artist's work cannot be interpreted. Had it been possible to explain in words what he wished to convey, the artist would have expressed himself in words. He expressed it by his art only because the feeling he experienced could not be otherwise transmitted. The interpretation of works of art by words only indicates that the interpreter is himself incapable of feeling the infection of art. And this is actually the case; for, however strange it may seem to say so, critics have always been people less susceptible than other men to the contagion of art. For the most part they are able writers, educated and clever, but with their capacity of being infected by art quite perverted or atrophied. And therefore their writings have always largely contributed, and still contribute, to the perversion of the taste of that public which reads them and trusts them.

Artistic criticism did not exist — could not and cannot exist — in societies where art is undivided, and where, consequently, it is appraised by the religious understanding of life common to the whole people. Art criticism grew, and could grow, only on the art of the upper classes, who did not acknowledge the religious perception of their time.

Universal art has a definite and indubitable internal criterion, — religious perception; upper-class art lacks this, and therefore the appreciators of that art are obliged to cling to some external criterion. And they find it in "the judgments of the finest-nurtured," as an English æsthetician has phrased it, that is, in the authority of the people who are considered educated, nor in this alone, but also in a tradition of such authorities. This tradition is extremely misleading, both because the opinions of "the finest-nurtured" are often mistaken,

and also because judgments which were valid once cease to be so with the lapse of time. But the critics, having no basis for their judgments, never cease to repeat their traditions. The classical tragedians were once considered good, and therefore criticism considers them to be so still. Dante was esteemed a great poet, Raphael a great painter, Bach a great musician — and the critics, lacking a standard by which to separate good art from bad, not only consider these artists great, but regard all their productions as admirable and worthy of imitation. Nothing has contributed, and still contributes, so much to the perversion of art as these authorities set up by criticism. A man produces a work of art, like every true artist expressing in his own peculiar manner a feeling he has experienced. Most people are infected by the artist's feeling; and his work becomes known. Then criticism, discussing the artist, says that the work is not bad, but all the same the artist is not a Dante, nor a Shakespear, nor a Goethe, nor a Raphael, nor what Beethoven was in his last period. And the young artist sets to work to copy those who are held up for his imitation, and he produces not only feeble works, but false works, — counterfeits of art.

Thus, for instance, our Pushkin writes his short poems, "Evgeniy Onegin," "The Gipsies," and his stories — works all varying in quality, but all true art. But then, under the influence of false criticism extolling Shakespear, he writes "Boris Godunoff," a cold, brain-spun work, and this production is lauded by the critics, set up as a model, and imitations of it appear: "Minin," by Ostrovsky, and "Tsar Boris," by Alexée Tolstoï, and such imitations of imitations as crowd all literatures with insignificant productions. The chief harm done by the critics is this, — that themselves lacking the capacity to be infected by art (and that is the characteristic of all critics; for did they not lack this they could not attempt the impossible — the interpretation of works of art), they pay most attention to, and eulogize, brain-spun, invented works, and set these up as models worthy of imitation. That is the reason they so confidently extol, in literature,

the Greek tragedians, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespear, Goethe (almost all he wrote), and, among recent writers, Zola and Ibsen; in music, Beethoven's last period, and Wagner. To justify their praise of these brain-spun, invented works, they devise entire theories (of which the famous theory of beauty is one); and not only dull but also talented people compose works in strict deference to these theories; and often even real artists, doing violence to their genius, submit to them.

Every false work extolled by the critics serves as a door through which the hypocrites of art at once crowd in.

It is solely due to the critics, who in our times still praise rude, savage, and, for us, often meaningless works of the ancient Greeks: Sophocles, Euripides, Æschylus, and especially Aristophanes; or, of modern writers, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Shakespear; in painting, all of Raphael, all of Michael Angelo, including his absurd "Last Judgment"; in music, the whole of Bach, and the whole of Beethoven, including his last period, — thanks only to them have the Ibsens, Maeterlincks, Verlaines, Mallarmés, Puvis de Chavannes, Klingers, Böcklins, Stucks, Schneiders; in music, the Wagners, Liszts, Berliozes, Brahmses, and Richard Strausses, etc., and all that immense mass of good-for-nothing imitators of these imitators, become possible in our day.

As a good illustration of the harmful influence of criticism, take its relation to Beethoven. Among his innumerable hasty productions written to order, there are, notwithstanding their artificiality of form, works of true art. But he grows deaf, cannot hear, and begins to write invented, unfinished works, which are consequently often meaningless and musically unintelligible. I know that musicians can imagine sounds vividly enough, and can almost hear what they read, but imaginary sounds can never replace real ones, and every composer must hear his production in order to perfect it. Beethoven, however, could not hear, could not perfect his work, and consequently published productions which are artistic ravings. But criticism, having once acknowledged him

to be a great composer, seizes on just these abnormal works with special gusto, and searches for extraordinary beauties in them. And, to justify its laudations (perverting the very meaning of musical art), it attributed to music the property of describing what it cannot describe. And imitators appear — an innumerable host of imitators of these abnormal attempts at artistic productions which Beethoven wrote when he was deaf.

Then Wagner appears, who at first in critical articles praises just Beethoven's last period, and connects this music with Schopenhauer's mystical theory that music is the expression of Will — not of separate manifestations of will objectivized on various planes, but its very essence — which is in itself as absurd as this music of Beethoven. And afterward he composes music of his own on this theory, in conjunction with another still more erroneous system of the union of all the arts. After Wagner yet new imitators appear, diverging yet further from art: Brahms, Richard Strauss, and others.

Such are the results of criticism. But the third condition of the perversion of art, namely, art schools, is almost more harmful still.

As soon as art became, not art for the whole people, but for a rich class, it became a profession; as soon as it became a profession, methods were devised to teach it; people who chose this profession of art began to learn these methods, and thus professional schools sprang up: classes of rhetoric or literature in the public schools, academies for painting, conservatoires for music, schools for dramatic art.

In these schools art is taught! But art is the transmission to others of a special feeling experienced by the artist. How can this be taught in schools?

No school can evoke feeling in a man, and still less can it teach him how to manifest it in the one particular manner natural to him alone. But the essence of art lies in these things.

The one thing these schools can teach is how to transmit feelings experienced by other artists in the way those other artists transmitted them. And this is

just what the professional schools do teach; and such instruction not only does not assist the spread of true art, but, on the contrary, by diffusing counterfeits of art, does more than anything else to deprive people of the capacity to understand true art.

In literary art people are taught how, without having anything they wish to say, to write a many-paged composition on a theme about which they have never thought, and, moreover, to write it so that it should resemble the work of an author admitted to be celebrated. This is taught in schools.

In painting, the chief training consists in learning to draw and paint from copies and models, the naked body chiefly (the very thing that is never seen, and which a man occupied with real art hardly ever has to depict), and to draw and paint as former masters drew and painted. The composition of pictures is taught by giving out themes similar to those which have been treated by former acknowledged celebrities.

So also in dramatic schools, the pupils are taught to recite monologues just as tragedians, considered celebrated, declaimed them.

It is the same in music. The whole theory of music is nothing but a disconnected repetition of those methods which the acknowledged masters of composition made use of.

I have elsewhere quoted the profound remark of the Russian artist Bruloff on art, but I cannot here refrain from repeating it, because nothing better illustrates what can and what cannot be taught in the schools. Once when correcting a pupil's study, Bruloff just touched it in a few places, and the poor dead study immediately became animated. "Why, you only touched it a *wee bit*, and it is quite another thing!" said one of the pupils. "Art begins where the *wee bit* begins," replied Bruloff, indicating by these words just what is most characteristic of art. The remark is true of all the arts, but its justice is particularly noticeable in the performance of music. That musical execution should be artistic, should be art, *i.e.* should infect, three chief

conditions must be observed, — there are many others needed for musical perfection; the transition from one sound to another must be interrupted or continuous; the sound must increase or diminish steadily; it must be blended with one and not with another sound; the sound must have this or that timbre, and much besides, — but take the three chief conditions; the pitch, the time, and the strength of the sound. Musical execution is only then art, only then infects, when the sound is neither higher nor lower than it should be, that is, when exactly the infinitely small center of the required note is taken; when that note is continued exactly as long as is needed; and when the strength of the sound is neither more nor less than is required. The slightest deviation of pitch in either direction, the slightest increase or decrease in time, or the slightest strengthening or weakening of the sound beyond what is needed, destroys the perfection and, consequently, the infectiousness of the work. So that the feeling of infection by the art of music, which seems so simple and so easily obtained, is a thing we receive only when the performer finds those infinitely minute degrees which are necessary to perfection in music. It is the same in all arts: a wee bit lighter, a wee bit darker, a wee bit higher, lower, to the right or the left — in painting; a wee bit weaker or stronger in intonation, or a wee bit sooner or later — in dramatic art; a wee bit omitted, over-emphasized, or exaggerated — in poetry, and there is no contagion. Infection is only obtained when an artist finds those infinitely minute degrees of which a work of art consists, and only to the extent to which he finds them. And it is quite impossible to teach people by external means to find these minute degrees; they can only be found when a man yields to his feeling. No instruction can make a dancer catch just the tact of the music, or a singer or a fiddler take exactly the infinitely minute center of his note, or a sketcher draw of all possible lines the only right one, or a poet find the only meet arrangement of the only suitable words. All this is found only by feeling.

And therefore schools may teach what is necessary in order to produce something resembling art, but not art itself.

The teaching of the schools stops there where the *wee bit* begins — consequently where art begins.

Accustoming people to something resembling art, disaccustoms them to the comprehension of real art. And that is how it comes about that none are more dull to art than those who have passed through the professional schools and been most successful in them. Professional schools produce an hypocrisy of art precisely akin to that hypocrisy of religion which is produced by theological colleges for training priests, pastors, and religious teachers generally. As it is impossible in a school to train a man so as to make a religious teacher of him, so it is impossible to teach a man how to become an artist.

Art schools are thus doubly destructive of art: first, in that they destroy the capacity to produce real art in those who have the misfortune to enter them and go through a seven or eight years' course; secondly, in that they generate enormous quantities of that counterfeit art which perverts the taste of the masses and overflows our world. In order that born artists may know the methods of the various arts elaborated by former artists, there should exist in all elementary schools such classes for drawing and music (singing) that, after passing through them, every talented scholar may, by using existing models accessible to all, be able to perfect himself in his art independently.

These three conditions — the professionalization of artists, art criticism, and art schools — have had this effect: that most people in our times are quite unable even to understand what art is, and accept as art the grossest counterfeits of it.

CHAPTER XIII

To what an extent people of our circle and time have lost the capacity to receive real art, and have become accustomed to accept as art things that have nothing in common with it, is best seen from the works of Richard Wagner, which have latterly come to be more and more esteemed, not only by the Germans, but also by the French and the English, as the very highest art, revealing new horizons to us.

The peculiarity of Wagner's music, as is known, consists in this, — that he considered that music should serve poetry, expressing all the shades of a poetical work.

The union of the drama with music, devised in the fifteenth century in Italy for the revival of what they imagined to have been the ancient Greek drama with music, is an artificial form which had, and has, success only among the upper classes, and that only when gifted composers, such as Mozart, Weber, Rossini, and others, drawing inspiration from a dramatic subject, yielded freely to the inspiration and subordinated the text to the music, so that in their operas the important thing to the audience was merely the music on a certain text, and not the text at all, which latter, even when it was utterly absurd, as, for instance, in the "Magic Flute," still did not prevent the music from producing an artistic impression.

Wagner wishes to correct the opera by letting music submit to the demands of poetry and unite with it. But each art has its own definite realm, which is not identical with the realm of other arts, but merely comes in contact with them; and therefore, if the manifestation of, I will not say several, but even of two arts — the dramatic and the musical — be united in one complete production, then the demands of the one art will make it impossible to fulfil the demands of the other, as has always occurred in the ordinary operas, where the dramatic art has submitted to, or rather yielded place to, the musical. Wagner wishes that musical art should

submit to dramatic art, and that both should appear in full strength. But this is impossible; for every work of art, if it be a true one, is an expression of intimate feelings of the artist, which are quite exceptional, and not like anything else. Such is a musical production, and such is a dramatic work, if they be true art. And therefore, in order that a production in the one branch of art should coincide with a production in the other branch, it is necessary that the impossible should happen: that two works from different realms of art should be absolutely exceptional, unlike anything that existed before, and yet should coincide, and be exactly alike.

And this cannot be, just as there cannot be two men, or even two leaves on a tree, exactly alike. Still less can two works from different realms of art, the musical and the literary, be absolutely alike. If they coincide, then either one is a work of art and the other a counterfeit, or both are counterfeits. Two live leaves cannot be exactly alike, but two artificial leaves may be. And so it is with works of art. They can only coincide completely when neither the one nor the other is art, but only cunningly devised semblances of it.

If poetry and music may be joined, as occurs in hymns, songs, and *romances* — (though even in these the music does not follow the changes of each verse of the text, as Wagner wants to, but the song and the music merely produce a coincident effect on the mind) — this occurs only because lyrical poetry and music have, to some extent, one and the same aim: to produce a mental condition and the conditions produced by lyrical poetry and by music can, more or less, coincide. But even in these conjunctions the center of gravity always lies in one of the two productions, so that it is one of them that produces the artistic impression while the other remains unregarded. And still less is it possible for such union to exist between epic or dramatic poetry and music.

Moreover, one of the chief conditions of artistic creation is the complete freedom of the artist from every kind of preconceived demand. And the necessity of adjusting his musical work to a work from another realm of

art is a preconceived demand of such a kind as to destroy all possibility of creative power; and therefore works of this kind, adjusted to one another, are, and must be, as has always happened, not works of art, but only imitations of art, like the music of a melodrama, signatures to pictures, illustrations, and librettos to operas.

And such are Wagner's productions. And a confirmation of this is to be seen in the fact that Wagner's new music lacks the chief characteristic of every true work of art; namely, such entirety and completeness that the smallest alteration in its form would disturb the meaning of the whole work. In a true work of art — poem, drama, picture, song, or symphony — it is impossible to extract one line, one scene, one figure, or one bar from its place and put it in another, without infringing the significance of the whole work; just as it is impossible, without infringing the life of an organic being, to extract an organ from one place and insert it in another. But in the music of Wagner's last period, with the exception of certain parts of little importance which have an independent musical meaning, it is possible to make all kinds of transpositions, putting what was in front behind, and *vice versa*, without altering the musical sense. And the reason why these transpositions do not alter the sense of Wagner's music is because the sense lies in the words and not in the music.

The musical score of Wagner's later operas is like what the result would be should one of those versifiers — of whom there are now many, with tongues so broken that they can write verses on any theme to any rhymes in any rhythm, which sound as if they had a meaning — conceive the idea of illustrating by his verses some symphony or sonata of Beethoven, or some ballade of Chopin, in the following manner. To the first bars, of one character, he writes verses corresponding in his opinion to those first bars. Next come some bars of a different character, and he also writes verses corresponding in his opinion to them, but with no internal connection with the first verses, and, moreover, without rhymes and without rhythm. Such a production, without the music,

would be exactly parallel in poetry to what Wagner's operas are in music, if heard without the words.

But Wagner is not only a musician, he is also a poet, or both together; and therefore, to judge of Wagner, one must know his poetry also — that same poetry which the music has to subserve. The chief poetical production of Wagner is "The Nibelung's Ring." This work has attained such enormous importance in our time, and has such influence on all that now professes to be art, that it is necessary for every one to-day to have some idea of it. I have carefully read through the four booklets which contain this work, and have drawn up a brief summary of it, which I give in Appendix III. I would strongly advise the reader (if he has not perused the poem itself, which would be the best thing to do) at least to read my account of it, so as to have an idea of this extraordinary work. It is a model work of counterfeit art, so gross as to be even ridiculous.

But we are told that it is impossible to judge of Wagner's works without seeing them on the stage. The Second Day of this drama, which, as I was told, is the best part of the whole work, was given in Moscow last winter, and I went to see the performance.

When I arrived the enormous theater was already filled from top to bottom. There were grand dukes, and the flower of the aristocracy, of the merchant class, of the learned, and of the middle-class official public. Most of them held the libretto, fathoming its meaning. Musicians — some of them elderly, gray-haired men — followed the music, score in hand. Evidently the performance of this work was an event of importance.

I was rather late, but I was told that the short prelude, with which the act begins, was of little importance, and that it did not matter having missed it. When I arrived, an actor sat on the stage amid decorations intended to represent a cave, and before something which was meant to represent a smith's forge. He was dressed in tricotights, with a cloak of skins, wore a wig and an artificial beard, and with white, weak genteel hands (his easy movements, and especially the shape of his stomach

and his lack of muscle revealed the actor) beat an impossible sword with an unnatural hammer in a way in which no one ever uses a hammer; and at the same time, opening his mouth in a strange way, he sang something incomprehensible. The music of various instruments accompanied the strange sounds which he emitted. From the libretto one was able to gather that the actor had to represent a powerful gnome, who lived in the cave, and who was forging a sword for Siegfried, whom he had reared. One could tell he was a gnome by the fact that the actor walked all the time bending the knees of his trico-covered legs. This gnome, still opening his mouth in the same strange way, long continued to sing or shout. The music meanwhile runs over something strange, like beginnings which are not continued and do not get finished. From the libretto one could learn that the gnome is telling himself about a ring which a giant had obtained, and which the gnome wishes to procure through Siegfried's aid, while Siegfried wants a good sword, on the forging of which the gnome is occupied. After this conversation or singing to himself has gone on rather a long time, other sounds are heard in the orchestra, also like something beginning and not finishing, and another actor appears, with a horn slung over his shoulder, and accompanied by a man running on all fours dressed up as a bear, whom he sets at the smith-gnome. The latter runs away without unbending the knees of his trico-covered legs. This actor with the horn represented the hero, Siegfried. The sounds which were emitted in the orchestra on the entrance of this actor were intended to represent Siegfried's character, and are called Siegfried's *leit-motiv*. And these sounds are repeated each time Siegfried appears. There is one fixed combination of sounds, or *leit-motiv*, for each character, and this *leit-motiv* is repeated every time the person whom it represents appears; and when any one is mentioned the *motiv* is heard which relates to that person. Moreover, each article also has its own *leit-motiv* or chord. There is a *motiv* of the ring, a *motiv* of the helmet, a *motiv* of the apple, a *motiv* of fire, spear, sword,

water, etc.; and as soon as the ring, helmet, or apple is mentioned, the *motiv* or chord of the ring, helmet, or apple is heard. The actor with the horn opens his mouth as unnaturally as the gnome, and long continues in a chanting voice to shout some words, and in a similar chant Mime (that is the gnome's name) answers something or other to him. The meaning of this conversation can only be discovered from the libretto; and it is that Siegfried was brought up by the gnome, and therefore, for some reason, hates him and always wishes to kill him. The gnome has forged a sword for Siegfried, but Siegfried is dissatisfied with it. From a ten-page conversation (by the libretto), lasting half an hour and conducted with the same strange openings of the mouth and chantings, it appears that Siegfried's mother gave birth to him in the wood, and that concerning his father all that is known is that he had a sword which was broken, the pieces of which are in Mime's possession, and that Siegfried does not know fear and wishes to go out of the wood. Mime, however, does not want to let him go. During the conversation the music never omits, at the mention of father, sword, etc., to sound the *motiv* of these people and things. After these conversations fresh sounds are heard — those of the god Wotan — and a wanderer appears. This wanderer is the god Wotan. Also dressed up in a wig, and also in tights, this god Wotan, standing in a stupid pose with a spear, thinks proper to recount what Mime must have known before, but what it is necessary to tell the audience. He does not tell it simply, but in the form of riddles which he orders himself to guess, staking his head (one does not know why) that he will guess right. Moreover, whenever the wanderer strikes his spear on the ground, fire comes out of the ground, and in the orchestra the sounds of spear and of fire are heard. The orchestra accompanies the conversation, and the *motiv* of the people and things spoken of are always artfully intermingled. Besides this the music expresses feelings in the most naïve manner: the terrible by sounds in the bass, the frivolous by rapid touches in the treble, etc.

The riddles have no meaning except to tell the audience what the *nibelungs* are, what the giants are, what the gods are, and what has happened before. This conversation also is chanted with strangely opened mouths and continues for eight libretto pages, and correspondingly long on the stage. After this the wanderer departs, and Siegfried returns and talks with Mime for thirteen pages more. There is not a single melody the whole of this time, but merely intertwinings of the *leit-motiv* of the people and things mentioned. The conversation tells that Mime wishes to teach Siegfried fear, and that Siegfried does not know what fear is. Having finished this conversation, Siegfried seizes one of the pieces of what is meant to represent the broken sword, saws it up, puts it on what is meant to represent the forge, melts it, and then forges it and sings: Heiho! heiho! heiho! Ho! ho! Aha! oho! aha! Heiaho! heiaho! heiaho! Ho! ho! Hahei! hoho! hahei! and Act I. finishes.

As far as the question I had come to the theater to decide was concerned, my mind was fully made up, as surely as on the question of the merits of my lady acquaintance's novel when she read me the scene between the loose-haired maiden in the white dress and the hero with two white dogs and a hat with a feather *à la Guillaume Tell.*

From an author who could compose such spurious scenes, outraging all æsthetic feeling, as those which I had witnessed, there was nothing to be hoped; it may safely be decided that all that such an author can write will be bad, because he evidently does not know what a true work of art is. I wished to leave, but the friends I was with asked me to remain, declaring that one could not form an opinion by that one act, and that the second would be better. So I stopped for the second act.

Act II., night. Afterward, dawn. In general, the whole piece is crammed with lights, clouds, moonlight, darkness, magic fires, thunder, etc.

The scene represents a wood, and in the wood there is a cave. At the entrance of the cave sits a third

actor in tights, representing another gnome. It dawns. Enter the god Wotan, again with a spear, and again in the guise of a wanderer. Again his sounds, together with fresh sounds of the deepest bass that can be produced. These latter indicate that the dragon is speaking. Wotan awakens the dragon. The same bass sounds are repeated, growing yet deeper and deeper. First the dragon says, "I want to sleep," but afterward he crawls out of the cave. The dragon is represented by two men; it is dressed in a green, scaly skin, waves a tail at one end, while at the other it opens a kind of crocodile's jaw that is fastened on, and from which flames appear. The dragon (who is meant to be dreadful, and may appear so to five-year-old children) speaks some words in a terribly bass voice. This is all so stupid, so like what is done in a booth at a fair, that it is surprising that people over seven years of age can witness it seriously; yet thousands of quasi-cultured people sit and attentively hear and see it, and are delighted.

Siegfried, with his horn, reappears, as does Mime also. In the orchestra the sounds denoting them are emitted, and they talk about whether Siegfried does or does not know what fear is. Mime goes away, and a scene commences which is intended to be most poetical. Siegfried, in his tights, lies down in a would-be beautiful pose, and alternately keeps silent and talks to himself. He ponders, listens to the song of birds, and wishes to imitate them. For this purpose he cuts a reed with his sword and makes a pipe. The dawn grows brighter and brighter; the birds sing. Siegfried tries to imitate the birds. In the orchestra is heard the imitation of birds, alternating with sounds corresponding to the words he speaks. But Siegfried does not succeed with his pipe-playing, so he plays on his horn instead. This scene is unendurable. Of music, *i.e.* of art serving as a means to transmit a state of mind experienced by the author, there is not even a suggestion. There is something that is absolutely unintelligible musically. In a musical sense a hope is continually experienced, followed by disap-

pointment, as if a musical thought were commenced only to be broken off. If there are something like musical commencements, these commencements are so short, so encumbered with complications of harmony and orchestration and with effects of contrast, are so obscure and unfinished, and what is happening on the stage meanwhile is so abominably false, that it is difficult even to perceive these musical snatches, let alone to be infected by them. Above all, from the very beginning to the very end, and in each note, the author's purpose is so audible and visible that one sees and hears neither Siegfried nor the birds, but only a limited, self-opinionated German, of bad taste and bad style, who has a most false conception of poetry, and who, in the rudest and most primitive manner, wishes to transmit to me these false and mistaken conceptions of his.

Every one knows the feeling of distrust and resistance which is always evoked by an author's evident predetermination. A narrator need only say in advance, Prepare to cry or to laugh, and you are sure neither to cry nor to laugh. But when you see that an author prescribes emotion at what is not touching, but only laughable or disgusting, and when you see, moreover, that the author is fully assured that he has captivated you, a painfully tormenting feeling results, similar to what one would feel if an old, deformed woman put on a ball-dress, and smilingly coquetted before you, confident of your approbation. This impression was strengthened by the fact that around me I saw a crowd of three thousand people, who not only patiently witnessed all this absurd nonsense, but even considered it their duty to be delighted with it.

I somehow managed to sit out the next scene also, in which the monster appears, to the accompaniment of his bass notes intermingled with the *motiv* of Siegfried; but after the fight with the monster, and all the roars, fires, and sword-wavings, I could stand no more of it, and escaped from the theater with a feeling of repulsion which, even now, I cannot forget.

Listening to this opera, I involuntarily thought of a

respected, wise, educated country laborer, — one, for instance, of those wise and truly religious men whom I know among the peasants, — and I pictured to myself the terrible perplexity such a man would be in were he to witness what I was seeing that evening.

What would he think if he knew of all the labor spent on such a performance, and saw that audience, those great ones of the earth, — old, bald-headed, gray-bearded men, whom he had been accustomed to respect, — sit silent and attentive, listening to and looking at all these stupidities for five hours on end? Not to speak of an adult laborer, one can hardly imagine even a child of over seven occupying himself with such a stupid, incoherent fairy tale.

And yet an enormous audience, the cream of the cultured upper classes, sits out five hours of this insane performance, and goes away imagining that by paying tribute to this nonsense it has acquired a fresh right to esteem itself advanced and enlightened.

I speak of the Moscow public. But what is the Moscow public? It is but a hundredth part of that public which, while considering itself most highly enlightened, esteems it a merit to have so lost the capacity of being infected by art, that not only can it witness this stupid sham without being revolted, but can even take delight in it.

In Bayreuth, where these performances were first given, people who consider themselves finely cultured assembled from the ends of the earth, spent, say one hundred pounds each, to see this performance, and for four days running they went to see and hear this nonsensical rubbish, sitting it out for six hours each day.

But why did people go, and why do they still go to these performances, and why do they admire them? The question naturally presents itself: How is the success of Wagner's works to be explained?

That success I explain to myself in this way: thanks to his exceptional position in having at his disposal the resources of a king, Wagner was able to command all the methods for counterfeiting art which have been de-

veloped by long usage, and, employing these methods with great ability, he produced a model work of counterfeit art. The reason why I have selected his work for my illustration is, that in no other counterfeit of art known to me are all the methods by which art is counterfeited — namely, borrowings, imitation, effects, and interestingness — so ably and powerfully united.

From the subject, borrowed from antiquity, to the clouds and the risings of the sun and moon, Wagner, in this work, has made use of all that is considered poetical. We have here the sleeping beauty, and nymphs, and subterranean fires, and gnomes, and battles, and swords, and love, and incest, and a monster, and singing-birds — the whole arsenal of the poetical is brought into action.

Moreover, everything is imitative; the decorations are imitated, and the costumes are imitated. All are just as, according to the data supplied by archæology, they would have been in antiquity. The very sounds are imitative; for Wagner, who was not destitute of musical talent, invented just such sounds as imitate the strokes of a hammer, the hissing of molten iron, the singing of birds, etc.

Furthermore, in this work everything is in the highest degree striking in its effects and in its peculiarities: its monsters, its magic fires, and its scenes under water; the darkness in which the audience sit, the invisibility of the orchestra, and the hitherto unemployed combinations of harmony.

And besides, it is all interesting. The interest lies not only in the question who will kill whom, and who will marry whom, and who is whose son, and what will happen next? — the interest lies also in the relation of the music to the text. The rolling waves of the Rhine —now how is that to be expressed in music? An evil gnome appears — how is the music to express an evil gnome? — and how is it to express the sensuality of this gnome? How will bravery, fire, or apples be expressed in music? How are the *leit-motiv* of the people speaking to be interwoven with the *leit-motiv* of the

people and objects about whom they speak? Besides, the music has a further interest. It diverges from all formerly accepted laws, and most unexpected and totally new modulations crop up (as is not only possible, but even easy in music having no inner law of its being); the dissonances are new, and are allowed in a new way — and this, too, is interesting.

And it is this poeticality, imitativeness, effectfulness, and interestingness which, thanks to the peculiarities of Wagner's talent, and to the advantageous position in which he was placed, are in these productions carried to the highest pitch of perfection, that so act on the spectator, hypnotizing him as one would be hypnotized who should listen for several consecutive hours to the ravings of a maniac pronounced with great oratorical power.

People say: "You cannot judge without having seen Wagner performed at Bayreuth: in the dark, where the orchestra is out of sight concealed under the stage, and where the performance is brought to the highest perfection." And this just proves that we have here no question of art, but one of hypnotism. It is just what the spiritualists say. To convince you of the reality of their apparitions they usually say, "You cannot judge; you must try it, be present at several séances," *i.e.* come and sit silent in the dark for hours together in the same room with semi-sane people, and repeat this some ten times over, and you shall see all that we see.

Yes, naturally! Only place yourself in such conditions, and you may see what you will. But this can be still more quickly attained by getting drunk or smoking opium. It is the same when listening to an opera of Wagner's. Sit in the dark for four days in company with people who are not quite normal, and, through the auditory nerves, subject your brain to the strongest action of the sounds best adapted to excite it, and you will no doubt be reduced to an abnormal condition, and be enchanted by absurdities. But to attain this end you do not even need four days; the five hours during which one "day" is enacted, as in Moscow, are quite enough.

Nor are five hours needed; even one hour is enough for people who have no clear conception of what art should be, and who have come to the conclusion in advance that what they are going to see is excellent, and that indifference or dissatisfaction with this work will serve as a proof of their inferiority and lack of culture.

I observed the audience present at this representation. The people who led the whole audience and gave the tone to it were those who had previously been hypnotized, and who again succumbed to the hypnotic influence to which they were accustomed. These hypnotized people, being in an abnormal condition, were perfectly enraptured. Moreover, all the art critics, who lack the capacity to be infected by art and therefore always especially prize works like Wagner's opera where it is all an affair of the intellect, also, with much profundity, expressed their approval of a work affording such ample material for ratiocination. And following these two groups went that large city crowd (indifferent to art, with their capacity to be infected by it perverted and partly atrophied), headed by the princes, millionaires, and art patrons, who, like sorry harriers, keep close to those who most loudly and decidedly express their opinion.

"Oh, yes, certainly! What poetry! Marvelous! Especially the birds!" "Yes, yes! I am quite vanquished!" exclaim these people, repeating in various tones what they have just heard from men whose opinion appears to them authoritative.

If some people do feel insulted by the absurdity and spuriousness of the whole thing, they are timidly silent, as sober men are timid and silent when surrounded by tipsy ones.

And thus, thanks to the masterly skill with which it counterfeits art while having nothing in common with it, a meaningless, coarse, spurious production finds acceptance all over the world, costs millions of roubles to produce, and assists more and more to pervert the taste of people of the upper classes and their conception of what is art.

CHAPTER XIV

I KNOW that most men — not only those considered clever, but even those who are very clever, and capable of understanding most difficult scientific, mathematical, or philosophic problems — can very seldom discern even the simplest and most obvious truth if it be such as to oblige them to admit the falsity of conclusions they have formed, perhaps with much difficulty — conclusions of which they are proud, which they have taught to others, and on which they have built their lives. And therefore I have little hope that what I adduce as to the perversion of art and taste in our society will be accepted or even seriously considered. Nevertheless, I must state fully the inevitable conclusion to which my investigation into the question of art has brought me. This investigation has brought me to the conviction that almost all that our society considers to be art, good art, and the whole of art, far from being real and good art, and the whole of art, is not even art at all, but only a counterfeit of it. This position, I know, will seem very strange and paradoxical; but if we once acknowledge art to be a human activity by means of which some people transmit their feelings to others (and not a service of Beauty, nor a manifestation of the Idea, and so forth), we shall inevitably have to admit this further conclusion also. If it is true that art is an activity by means of which one man, having experienced a feeling, intentionally transmits it to others, then we have inevitably to admit further, that of all that among us is termed the art of the upper classes — of all those novels, stories, dramas, comedies, pictures, sculptures, symphonies, operas, operettas, ballets, etc., which profess to be works of art — scarcely one in a hundred thousand proceeds from an emotion felt by its author, all the rest being but manufactured counterfeits of art, in which borrowing, imitating, effects, and interestingness replace the contagion of feeling. That the proportion of real productions of art is to the counterfeits as one to some hundreds of thousands or

even more, may be seen by the following calculation. I have read somewhere that the artist painters in Paris alone number 30,000; there will probably be as many in England, as many in Germany, and as many in Russia, Italy, and the smaller states combined. So that in all there will be in Europe, say, 120,000 painters; and there are probably as many musicians and as many literary artists. If these 360,000 individuals produce three works a year each (and many of them produce ten or more), then each year yields over a million so-called works of art. How many, then, must have been produced in the last ten years, and how many in the whole time since upper-class art broke off from the art of the whole people? Evidently millions. Yet who of all the connoisseurs of art has received impressions from all these pseudo works of art? Not to mention all the laboring classes who have no conception of these productions, even people of the upper classes cannot know one in a thousand of them all, and cannot remember those they have known. These works all appear under the guise of art, produce no impression on any one (except when they serve as pastimes for the idle crowd of rich people), and vanish utterly.

In reply to this it is usually said that without this enormous number of unsuccessful attempts we should not have the real works of art. But such reasoning is as though a baker, in reply to a reproach that his bread was bad, were to say that if it were not for the hundreds of spoiled loaves there would not be any well-baked ones. It is true that where there is gold there is also much sand; but that cannot serve as a reason for talking a lot of nonsense in order to say something wise.

We are surrounded by productions considered artistic. Thousands of verses, thousands of poems, thousands of novels, thousands of dramas, thousands of pictures, thousands of musical pieces, follow one after another. All the verses describe love, or nature, or the author's state of mind, and in all of them rhyme and rhythm are observed. All the dramas and comedies are splendidly mounted and are performed by admirably trained

actors. All the novels are divided into chapters; all of them describe love, contain effective situations, and correctly describe the details of life. All the symphonies contain *allegro*, *andante*, *scherzo*, and *finale;* all consist of modulations and chords, and are played by highly trained musicians. All the pictures, in gold frames, saliently depict faces and sundry accessories. But among these productions in the various branches of art, there is in each branch one among hundreds of thousands, not only somewhat better than the rest, but differing from them as a diamond differs from paste. The one is priceless, the others not only have no value, but are worse than valueless, for they deceive and pervert taste. And yet, externally, they are, to a man of perverted or atrophied artistic perception, precisely alike.

In our society the difficulty of recognizing real works of art is further increased by the fact that the external quality of the work in false productions is not only no worse, but often better, than in real ones; the counterfeit is often more effective than the real, and its subject more interesting. How is one to discriminate? How is one to find a production in no way distinguished in externals from hundreds of thousands of others intentionally made to imitate it precisely?

For a country peasant of unperverted taste this is as easy as it is for an animal of unspoilt scent to follow the trace he needs among a thousand others in wood or forest. The animal unerringly finds what he needs. So also the man, if only his natural qualities have not been perverted, will, without fail, select from among thousands of objects the real work of art he requires, — that infecting him with the feeling experienced by the artist. But it is not so with those whose taste has been perverted by their education and life. The receptive feeling for art of these people is atrophied, and in valuing artistic productions they must be guided by discussion and study, which discussion and study completely confuse them. So that most people in our society are quite unable to distinguish a work of art from the

grossest counterfeit. People sit for whole hours in concert-rooms and theaters listening to the new composers, consider it a duty to read the novels of the famous modern novelists, and to look at pictures representing either something incomprehensible, or just the very things they see much better in real life; and, above all, they consider it incumbent on them to be enraptured by all this, imagining it all to be art, while at the same time they will pass real works of art by, not only without attention, but even with contempt, merely because, in their circle, these works are not included in the list of works of art.

A few days ago I was returning home from a walk feeling depressed, as occurs sometimes. On nearing the house I heard the loud singing of a large choir of peasant women. They were welcoming my daughter, celebrating her return home after her marriage. In this singing, with its cries and clanging of scythes, such a definite feeling of joy, cheerfulness, and energy was expressed, that, without noticing how it infected me, I continued my way toward the house in a better mood, and reached home smiling, and quite in good spirits. That same evening, a visitor, an admirable musician, famed for his execution of classical music, and particularly of Beethoven, played us Beethoven's sonata, Opus 101. For the benefit of those who might otherwise attribute my judgment of that sonata of Beethoven to non-comprehension of it, I should mention that, whatever other people understand of that sonata and of other productions of Beethoven's later period, I, being very susceptible to music, equally understood. For a long time I used to attune myself so as to delight in those shapeless improvisations which form the subject-matter of the works of Beethoven's later period, but I had only to consider the question of art seriously, and to compare the impression I received from Beethoven's later works with those pleasant, clear, and strong musical impressions which are transmitted, for instance, by the melodies of Bach (his arias), Haydn, Mozart, Chopin, (when his melodies are not overloaded with complica-

tions and ornamentation), and of Beethoven himself in his earlier period, and, above all, with the impressions produced by folk-songs, — Italian, Norwegian, or Russian, — by the Hungarian *tzardas*, and other such simple, clear, and powerful music, and the obscure, almost unhealthy excitement from Beethoven's later pieces that I had artificially evoked in myself was immediately destroyed.

On the completion of the performance (though it was noticeable that every one had become dull) those present, in the accepted manner, warmly praised Beethoven's profound production, and did not forget to add that formerly they had not been able to understand that last period of his, but that they now saw that he was really then at his very best. And when I ventured to compare the impression made on me by the singing of the peasant women — an impression which had been shared by all who heard it — with the effect of this sonata, the admirers of Beethoven only smiled contemptuously, not considering it necessary to reply to such strange remarks.

But, for all that, the song of the peasant women was real art, transmitting a definite and strong feeling; while the 101st sonata of Beethoven was only an unsuccessful attempt at art, containing no definite feeling, and therefore not infectious.

For my work on art I have this winter read diligently, though with great effort, the celebrated novels and stories, praised by all Europe, written by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, and Kipling. At the same time I chanced on a story in a child's magazine, and by a quite unknown writer, which told of the Easter preparations in a poor widow's family. The story tells how the mother managed with difficulty to obtain some wheat-flour, which she poured on the table ready to knead. She then went out to procure some yeast, telling the children not to leave the hut, and to take care of the flour. When the mother had gone, some other children ran shouting near the window, calling those in the hut to come to play. The children forgot their mother's warning, ran into the

street, and were soon engrossed in the game. The mother, on her return with the yeast, finds a hen on the table throwing the last of the flour to her chickens, who were busily picking it out of the dust of the earthen floor. The mother, in despair, scolds the children, who cry bitterly. And the mother begins to feel pity for them — but the white flour has all gone. So to mend matters she decides to make the Easter cake with sifted rye-flour, brushing it over with white of egg, and surrounding it with eggs. "Rye-bread which we bake is akin to any cake," says the mother, using a rhyming proverb to console the children for not having an Easter cake made with white flour. And the children, quickly passing from despair to rapture, repeat the proverb and await the Easter cake more merrily even than before.

Well! the reading of the novels and stories by Zola, Bourget, Huysmans, Kipling, and others, handling the most harrowing subjects, did not touch me for one moment, and I was provoked with the authors all the while, as one is provoked with a man who considers you so naïve that he does not even conceal the trick by which he intends to take you in. From the first lines you see the intention with which the book is written, and the details all become superfluous, and one feels dull. Above all, one knows that the author had no other feeling all the time than a desire to write a story or a novel, and so one receives no artistic impression. On the other hand, I could not tear myself away from the unknown author's tale of the children and the chickens, because I was at once infected by the feeling which the author had evidently experienced, reëvoked in himself, and transmitted.

Vasnetsoff is one of our Russian painters. He has painted ecclesiastical pictures in Kieff Cathedral, and every one praises him as the founder of some new, elevated kind of Christian art. He worked at those pictures for ten years, was paid tens of thousands of roubles for them, and they are all simply bad imitations of imitations of imitations, destitute of any

spark of feeling. And this same Vasnetsoff drew a picture for Tourgenieff's story, "The Quail" (in which it is told how, in his son's presence, a father killed a quail and felt pity for it), showing the boy asleep with pouting upper lip, and above him, as a dream, the quail. And this picture is a true work of art.

In the English Academy of 1897 two pictures were exhibited together; one of which, by J. C. Dolman, was the temptation of St. Anthony. The saint is on his knees praying. Behind him stands a naked woman and animals of some kind. It is apparent that the naked woman pleased the artist very much, but that Anthony did not concern him at all; and that, so far from the temptation being terrible to him (the artist) it is highly agreeable. And therefore if there be any art in this picture, it is very nasty and false. Next in the same book of academy pictures comes a picture by Langley, showing a stray beggar-boy, who has evidently been called in by a woman who has taken pity on him. The boy, pitifully drawing his bare feet under the bench, is eating; the woman is looking on, probably considering whether he will not want some more; and a girl of about seven, leaning on her arm, is carefully and seriously looking on, not taking her eyes from the hungry boy, and evidently understanding for the first time what poverty is, and what inequality among people is, and asking herself why she has everything provided for her while this boy goes barefoot and hungry? She feels sorry, and yet pleased. And she loves both the boy and goodness.... And one feels that the artist loved this girl, and that she too loves. And this picture, by an artist who, I think, is not very widely known, is an admirable and true work of art.

I remember seeing a performance of "Hamlet" by Rossi. Both the tragedy itself and the performer who took the chief part are considered by our critics to represent the climax of supreme dramatic art. And yet, both from the subject-matter of the drama and from the performance, I experienced all the time that peculiar suffering which is caused by false imitations

of works of art. And I lately read of a theatrical performance among the savage tribe, the Voguls. A spectator describes the play. A big Vogul and a little one, both dressed in reindeer skins, represent a reindeer-doe and its young. A third Vogul, with a bow, represents a huntsman on snow-shoes, and a fourth imitates with his voice a bird that warns the reindeer of their danger. The play is that the huntsman follows the track that the doe with its young one has traveled. The deer run off the scene, and again reappear. (Such performances take place in a small tent-house.) The huntsman gains more and more on the pursued. The little deer is tired, and presses against its mother. The doe stops to draw breath. The hunter comes up with them and draws his bow. But just then the bird sounds its note, warning the deer of their danger. They escape. Again there is a chase, and again the hunter gains on them, catches them, and lets fly his arrow. The arrow strikes the young deer. Unable to run, the little one presses against its mother. The mother licks its wound. The hunter draws another arrow. The audience, as the eye-witness describes them, are paralyzed with suspense; deep groans and even weeping is heard among them. And, from the mere description, I felt that this was a true work of art.

What I am saying will be considered irrational paradox, at which one can only be amazed; but for all that I must say what I think; namely, that people of our circle, of whom some compose verses, stories, novels, operas, symphonies, and sonatas, paint all kinds of pictures and make statues, while others hear and look at these things, and again others appraise and criticize it all, discuss, condemn, triumph, and raise monuments to one another, generation after generation, — that all these people, with very few exceptions, artists, and public, and critics, have never (except in childhood and earliest youth, before hearing any discussions on art) experienced that simple feeling familiar to the plainest man and even to a child, that sense of infection with another's feeling, — compel-

ling us to joy in another's gladness, to sorrow at another's grief, and to mingle souls with another, — which is the very essence of art. And therefore these people not only cannot distinguish true works of art from counterfeits, but continually mistake for real art the worst and most artificial, while they do not even perceive works of real art, because the counterfeits are always more ornate, while true art is modest.

CHAPTER XV

Art, in our society, has been so perverted that not only has bad art come to be considered good, but even the very perception of what art really is has been lost. In order to be able to speak about the art of our society, it is, therefore, first of all necessary to distinguish art from counterfeit art.

There is one indubitable indication distinguishing real art from its counterfeit, namely, the infectiousness of art. If a man, without exercising effort and without altering his standpoint, on reading, hearing, or seeing another man's work, experiences a mental condition which unites him with that man and with other people who also partake of that work of art, then the object evoking that condition is a work of art. And however poetical, realistic, effectful, or interesting a work may be, it is not a work of art if it does not evoke that feeling (quite distinct from all other feelings) of joy, and of spiritual union with another (the author) and with others (those who are also infected by it).

It is true that this indication is an *internal* one, and that there are people who have forgotten what the action of real art is, who expect something else from art (in our society the great majority are in this state), and that therefore such people may mistake for this æsthetic feeling the feeling of divertisement and a certain excitement which they receive from counterfeits of art. But though it is impossible to undeceive these people, just as it is impossible to convince a man suffering from "Dalton-

ism" that green is not red, yet, for all that, this indication remains perfectly definite to those whose feeling for art is neither perverted nor atrophied, and it clearly distinguishes the feeling produced by art from all other feelings.

The chief peculiarity of this feeling is that the receiver of a true artistic impression is so united to the artist that he feels as if the work were his own and not some one else's, — as if what it expresses were just what he had long been wishing to express. A real work of art destroys, in the consciousness of the receiver, the separation between himself and the artist; nor that alone, but also between himself and all whose minds receive this work of art. In this freeing of our personality from its separation and isolation, in this uniting of it with others, lies the chief characteristic and the great attractive force of art.

If a man is infected by the author's condition of soul, if he feels this emotion and this union with others, then the object which has effected this is art; but if there be no such infection, if there be not this union with the author and with others who are moved by the same work — then it is not art. And not only is infection a sure sign of art, but the degree of infectiousness is also the sole measure of excellence in art.

The stronger the infection the better is the art; as art, speaking now apart from its subject-matter, *i.e.* not considering the quality of the feelings it transmits.

And the degree of the infectiousness of art depends on three conditions: —

(1) On the greater or lesser individuality of the feeling transmitted; (2) on the greater or lesser clearness with which the feeling is transmitted; (3) on the sincerity of the artist, *i.e.* on the greater or lesser force with which the artist himself feels the emotion he transmits.

The more individual the feeling transmitted the more strongly does it act on the receiver; the more individual the state of soul into which he is transferred the more pleasure does the receiver obtain, and therefore the more readily and strongly does he join in it.

The clearness of expression assists infection, because the receiver, who mingles in consciousness with the author, is the better satisfied the more clearly the feeling is transmitted, which, as it seems to him, he has long known and felt, and for which he has only now found expression.

But most of all is the degree of infectiousness of art increased by the degree of sincerity in the artist. As soon as the spectator, hearer, or reader feels that the artist is infected by his own production, and writes, sings, or plays for himself, and not merely to act on others, this mental condition of the artist infects the receiver; and, contrariwise, as soon as the spectator, reader, or hearer feels that the author is not writing, singing, or playing for his own satisfaction, — does not himself feel what he wishes to express, — but is doing it for him, the receiver, a resistance immediately springs up, and the most individual and the newest feelings and the cleverest technique not only fail to produce any infection, but actually repel.

I have mentioned three conditions of contagiousness in art, but they may be all summed up into one, the last, sincerity, *i.e.* that the artist should be impelled by an inner need to express his feeling. That condition includes the first; for if the artist is sincere he will express the feeling as he experienced it. And as each man is different from every one else, his feeling will be individual for every one else; and the more individual it is, — the more the artist has drawn it from the depths of his nature, — the more sympathetic and sincere will it be. And this same sincerity will impel the artist to find a clear expression of the feeling which he wishes to transmit.

Therefore this third condition — sincerity — is the most important of the three. It is always complied with in peasant art, and this explains why such art always acts so powerfully; but it is a condition almost entirely absent from our upper-class art, which is continually produced by artists actuated by personal aims of covetousness or vanity.

Such are the three conditions which divide art from its counterfeits, and which also decide the quality of every work of art apart from its subject-matter.

The absence of any one of these conditions excludes a work from the category of art and relegates it to that of art's counterfeits. If the work does not transmit the artist's peculiarity of feeling, and is therefore not individual, if it is unintelligibly expressed, or if it has not proceeded from the author's inner need for expression — it is not a work of art. If all these conditions are present, even in the smallest degree, then the work, even if a weak one, is yet a work of art.

The presence in various degrees of these three conditions — individuality, clearness, and sincerity — decides the merit of a work of art, as art, apart from subject-matter. All works of art take rank of merit according to the degree in which they fulfil the first, the second, and the third of these conditions. In one the individuality of the feeling transmitted may predominate; in another, clearness of expression; in a third, sincerity; while a fourth may have sincerity and individuality, but be deficient in clearness; a fifth, individuality and clearness, but less sincerity; and so forth, in all possible degrees and combinations.

Thus is art divided from not art, and thus is the quality of art, as art, decided, independently of its subject-matter, *i.e.* apart from whether the feelings it transmits are good or bad.

But how are we to define good and bad art with reference to its subject-matter?

CHAPTER XVI

How in art are we to decide what is good and what is bad in subject-matter?

Art, like speech, is a means of communication, and therefore of progress, *i.e.* of the movement of humanity forward toward perfection. Speech renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the knowledge dis

covered by the experience and reflection, both of preceding generations and of the best and foremost men of their own times; art renders accessible to men of the latest generations all the feelings experienced by their predecessors, and those also which are being felt by their best and foremost contemporaries. And as the evolution of knowledge proceeds by truer and more necessary knowledge dislodging and replacing what is mistaken and unnecessary, so the evolution of feeling proceeds through art, — feelings less kind and less needful for the well-being of mankind are replaced by others kinder and more needful for that end. That is the purpose of art. And, speaking now of its subject-matter, the more art fulfils that purpose the better the art, and the less it fulfils it the worse the art.

And the appraisement of feelings (*i.e.* the acknowledgment of these or those feelings as being more or less good, more or less necessary for the well-being of mankind) is made by the religious perception of the age.

In every period of history, and in every human society, there exists an understanding of the meaning of life which represents the highest level to which men of that society have attained, — an understanding defining the highest good at which that society aims. And this understanding is the religious perception of the given time and society. And this religious perception is always clearly expressed by some advanced men, and more or less vividly perceived by all the members of the society. Such a religious perception and its corresponding expression exists always in every society. If it appears to us that in our society there is no religious perception, this is not because there really is none, but only because we do not want to see it. And we often wish not to see it because it exposes the fact that our life is inconsistent with that religious perception.

Religious perception in a society is like the direction of a flowing river. If the river flows at all, it must have a direction. If a society lives, there must be a religious perception indicating the direction in which, more or less consciously, all its members tend.

And so there always has been, and there is, a religious perception in every society. And it is by the standard of this religious perception that the feelings transmitted by art have always been estimated. Only on the basis of this religious perception of their age have men always chosen from the endlessly varied spheres of art that art which transmitted feelings making religious perception operative in actual life. And such art has always been highly valued and encouraged; while art transmitting feelings already outlived, flowing from the antiquated religious perceptions of a former age, has always been condemned and despised. All the rest of art, transmitting those most diverse feelings by means of which people commune together, was not condemned, and was tolerated, if only it did not transmit feelings contrary to religious perception. Thus, for instance, among the Greeks, art transmitting the feeling of beauty, strength, and courage (Hesiod, Homer, Phidias) was chosen, approved, and encouraged; while art transmitting feelings of rude sensuality, despondency, and effeminacy was condemned and despised. Among the Jews, art transmitting feelings of devotion and submission to the God of the Hebrews and to His will (the epic of Genesis, the prophets, the Psalms) was chosen and encouraged, while art transmitting feelings of idolatry (the golden calf) was condemned and despised. All the rest of art — stories, songs, dances, ornamentation of houses, of utensils, and of clothes — which was not contrary to religious perception, was neither distinguished nor discussed. Thus, in regard to its subject-matter, has art been appraised always and everywhere, and thus it should be appraised; for this attitude toward art proceeds from the fundamental characteristics of human nature, and those characteristics do not change.

I know that according to an opinion current in our times religion is a superstition which humanity has outgrown, and that it is therefore assumed that no such thing exists as a religious perception, common to us all, by which art, in our time, can be estimated. I know that this is the opinion current in the pseudo-cultured

circles of to-day. People who do not acknowledge Christianity in its true meaning because it undermines all their social privileges, and who, therefore, invent all kinds of philosophic and æsthetic theories to hide from themselves the meaninglessness and wrongness of their lives, cannot think otherwise. These people intentionally, or sometimes unintentionally, confusing the conception of a religious cult with the conception of religious perception, think that by denying the cult they get rid of religious perception. But even the very attacks on religion, and the attempts to establish a life-conception contrary to the religious perception of our times, most clearly demonstrate the existence of a religious perception condemning the lives that are not in harmony with it.

If humanity progresses, *i.e.* moves forward, there must inevitably be a guide to the direction of that movement. And religions have always furnished that guide. All history shows that the progress of humanity is accomplished not otherwise than under the guidance of religion. But if the race cannot progress without the guidance of religion, — and progress is always going on, and consequently also in our own times, — then there must be a religion of our times. So that, whether it pleases or displeases the so-called cultured people of to-day, they must admit the existence of religion, — not of a religious cult, Catholic, Protestant, or another, but of religious perception, — which, even in our times, is the guide always present where there is any progress. And if a religious perception exists amongst us, then our art should be appraised on the basis of that religious perception; and, as has always and everywhere been the case, art transmitting feelings flowing from the religious perception of our time should be chosen from all the indifferent art, should be acknowledged, highly esteemed, and encouraged; while art running counter to that perception should be condemned and despised, and all the remaining indifferent art should neither be distinguished nor encouraged.

The religious perception of our time, in its widest

and most practical application, is the consciousness that our well-being, both material and spiritual, individual and collective, temporal and eternal, lies in the growth of brotherhood among all men — in their loving harmony with one another. This perception is not only expressed by Christ and all the best men of past ages, it is not only repeated in the most varied forms and from most diverse sides by the best men of our own times, but it already serves as a clue to all the complex labor of humanity, consisting as this labor does, on the one hand, in the destruction of physical and moral obstacles to the union of men, and, on the other hand, in establishing the principles common to all men which can and should unite them into one universal brotherhood. And it is on the basis of this perception that we should appraise all the phenomena of our life, and, among the rest, our art also; choosing from all its realms whatever transmits feelings flowing from this religious perception, highly prizing and encouraging such art, rejecting whatever is contrary to this perception, and not attributing to the rest of art an importance not properly pertaining to it.

The chief mistake made by people of the upper classes of the time of the so-called Renaissance — a mistake which we still perpetuate — was not that they ceased to value and to attach importance to religious art (people of that period could not attach importance to it, because, like our own upper classes, they could not believe in what the majority considered to be religion), but their mistake was that they set up in place of religious art, which was lacking, an insignificant art which aimed only at giving pleasure, *i.e.* they began to choose, to value, and to encourage, in place of religious art, something which, in any case, did not deserve such esteem and encouragement.

One of the Fathers of the Church said that the great evil is, not that men do not know God, but that they have set up, instead of God, that which is not God. So also with art. The great misfortune of the people of the upper classes of our time is not so much that they

are without a religious art, as that, instead of a supreme religious art, chosen from all the rest as being specially important and valuable, they have chosen a most insignificant and, usually, harmful art, which aims at pleasing certain people, and which, therefore, if only by its exclusive nature, stands in contradiction to that Christian principle of universal union which forms the religious perception of our time. Instead of religious art, an empty and often vicious art is set up, and this hides from men's notice the need of that true religious art which should be present in life in order to improve it.

It is true that art which satisfies the demands of the religious perception of our time is quite unlike former art, but, notwithstanding this dissimilarity, to a man who does not intentionally hide the truth from himself, it is very clear and definite what does form the religious art of our age. In former times, when the highest religious perception united only some people (who, even if they formed a large society, were yet but one society surrounded by others — Jews, or Athenian or Roman citizens), the feelings transmitted by the art of that time flowed from a desire for the might, greatness, glory, and prosperity of that society, and the heroes of art might be people who contributed to that prosperity by strength, by craft, by fraud, or by cruelty (Ulysses, Jacob, David, Samson, Hercules, and all the heroes). But the religious perception of our times does not select any one society of men; on the contrary, it demands the union of all, — absolutely of all people without exception, — and above every other virtue it sets brotherly love to all men. And, therefore, the feelings transmitted by the art of our time not only cannot coincide with the feelings transmitted by former art, but must run counter to them.

Christian, truly Christian, art has been so long in establishing itself, and has not yet established itself, just because the Christian religious perception was not one of those small steps by which humanity advances regularly, but was an enormous revolution, which, if it has not already altered, must inevitably alter the entire life-con-

ception of mankind, and, consequently, the whole internal organization of their life. It is true that the life of humanity, like that of an individual, moves regularly; but in that regular movement come, as it were, turning-points, which sharply divide the preceding from the subsequent life. Christianity was such a turning-point; such, at least, it must appear to us who live by the Christian perception of life. Christian perception gave another, a new, direction to all human feelings, and therefore completely altered both the contents and the significance of art. The Greeks could make use of Persian art and the Romans could use Greek art, or, similarly, the Jews could use Egyptian art, — the fundamental ideals were one and the same. Now the ideal was the greatness and prosperity of the Persians, now the greatness and prosperity of the Greeks, now that of the Romans. The same art was transferred into other conditions, and served new nations. But the Christian ideal changed and reversed everything, so that, as the gospel puts it, "That which was exalted among men has become an abomination in the sight of God." The ideal is no longer the greatness of Pharaoh or of a Roman emperor, not the beauty of a Greek, nor the wealth of Phœnicia, but humility, purity, compassion, love. The hero is no longer Dives, but Lazarus the beggar; not Mary Magdalene in the day of her beauty, but in the day of her repentance; not those who acquire wealth, but those who have abandoned it; not those who dwell in palaces, but those who dwell in catacombs and huts; not those who rule over others, but those who acknowledge no authority but God's. And the greatest work of art is no longer a cathedral of victory [1] with statues of conquerors, but the representation of a human soul so transformed by love that a man who is tormented and murdered yet pities and loves his persecutors.

And the change is so great that men of the Christian world find it difficult to resist the inertia of the heathen art to which they have been accustomed all their lives.

[1] There is in Moscow a magnificent "Cathedral of our Saviour," erected to commemorate the defeat of the French in the war of 1812. — Tr.

The subject-matter of Christian religious art is so new to them, so unlike the subject-matter of former art, that it seems to them as though Christian art were a denial of art, and they cling desperately to the old art. But this old art, having no longer, in our day, any source in religious perception, has lost its meaning, and we shall have to abandon it whether we wish to or not.

The essence of the Christian perception consists in the recognition by every man of his sonship to God, and of the consequent union of men with God and with one another, as is said in the gospel (John xvii. 21[1]). Therefore the subject-matter of Christian art is such feeling as can unite men with God and with one another.

The expression *unite men with God and with one another* may seem obscure to people accustomed to the misuse of these words which is so customary, but the words have a perfectly clear meaning nevertheless. They indicate that the Christian union of man (in contradiction to the partial, exclusive union of only some men) is that which unites all without exception.

Art, all art, has this characteristic, that it unites people. Every art causes those to whom the artist's feeling is transmitted to unite in soul with the artist, and also with all who receive the same impression. But non-Christian art, while uniting some people together, makes that very union a cause of separation between these united people and others; so that union of this kind is often a source, not only of division, but even of enmity toward others. Such is all patriotic art, with its anthems, poems, and monuments; such is all Church art, *i.e.* the art of certain cults, with their images, statues, processions, and other local ceremonies. Such art is belated and non-Christian art, uniting the people of one cult only to separate them yet more sharply from the members of other cults, and even to place them in relations of hostility to each other. Christian art is only such as tends to unite all without exception, either by evoking in them the perception that each man and all

[1] "That they may be one; even as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be in us."

men stand in like relation toward God and toward their neighbor, or by evoking in them identical feelings, which may even be the very simplest, provided only that they are not repugnant to Christianity and are natural to every one without exception.

Good Christian art of our time may be unintelligible to people because of imperfections in its form, or because men are inattentive to it, but it must be such that all men can experience the feelings it transmits. It must be the art, not of some one group of people, nor of one class, nor of one nationality, nor of one religious cult; that is, it must not transmit feelings which are accessible only to a man educated in a certain way, or only to an aristocrat, or a merchant, or only to a Russian, or a native of Japan, or a Roman Catholic, or a Buddhist, etc., but it must transmit feelings accessible to every one. Only art of this kind can be acknowledged in our time to be good art, worthy of being chosen out from all the rest of art and encouraged.

Christian art, *i.e.* the art of our time, should be catholic in the original meaning of the word, *i.e.* universal, and therefore it should unite all men. And only two kinds of feeling do unite all men: first, feelings flowing from the perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man; and next, the simple feelings of common life, accessible to every one without exception — such as the feeling of merriment, of pity, of cheerfulness, of tranquillity, etc. Only these two kinds of feelings can now supply material for art good in its subject-matter.

And the action of these two kinds of art, apparently so dissimilar, is one and the same. The feelings flowing from perception of our sonship to God and of the brotherhood of man — such as a feeling of sureness in truth, devotion to the will of God, self-sacrifice, respect for and love of man — evoked by Christian religious perception; and the simplest feelings — such as a softened or a merry mood caused by a song or an amusing jest intelligible to every one, or by a touching story, or a drawing, or a little doll: both alike produce one and the same effect, — the loving union of man with man. Some-

times people who are together are, if not hostile to one another, at least estranged in mood and feeling, till perchance a story, a performance, a picture, or even a building, but oftenest of all, music, unites them all as by an electric flash, and, in place of their former isolation or even enmity, they are all conscious of union and mutual love. Each is glad that another feels what he feels; glad of the communion established, not only between him and all present, but also with all now living who will yet share the same impression; and more than that, he feels the mysterious gladness of a communion which, reaching beyond the grave, unites us with all men of the past who have been moved by the same feelings, and with all men of the future who will yet be touched by them. And this effect is produced both by the religious art which transmits feelings of love to God and one's neighbor, and by universal art, transmitting the very simplest feelings common to all men.

The art of our time should be appraised differently from former art chiefly in this, that the art of our time, *i.e.* Christian art (basing itself on a religious perception which demands the union of man), excludes from the domain of art good in subject-matter everything transmitting exclusive feelings, which do not unite but divide men. It relegates such work to the category of art bad in its subject-matter, while, on the other hand, it includes in the category of art good in subject-matter a section not formerly admitted to deserve to be chosen out and respected, namely, universal art, transmitting even the most trifling and simple feelings if only they are accessible to all men without exception, and therefore unite them. Such art cannot, in our time, but be esteemed good, for it attains the end which the religious perception of our time, *i.e.* Christianity, sets before humanity.

Christian art either evokes in men those feelings which, through love of God and of one's neighbor, draw them to greater and ever greater union, and make them ready for and capable of such union; or evokes in them those feelings which show them that they are already united in the joys and sorrows of life. And therefore the Christian

art of our time can be and is of two kinds: (1) art transmitting feelings flowing from a religious perception of man's position in the world in relation to God and to his neighbor — religious art in the limited meaning of the term; and (2) art transmitting the simplest feelings of common life, but such, always, as are accessible to all men in the whole world — the art of common life — the art of a people — universal art. Only these two kinds of art can be considered good art in our time.

The first, religious art, — transmitting both positive feelings of love to God and one's neighbor, and negative feelings of indignation and horror at the violation of love, — manifests itself chiefly in the form of words, and to some extent also in painting and sculpture: the second kind (universal art), transmitting feelings accessible to all, manifests itself in words, in painting, in sculpture, in dances, in architecture, and, most of all, in music.

If I were asked to give modern examples of each of these kinds of art, then, as examples of the highest art, flowing from love of God and man (both of the higher, positive, and of the lower, negative kind), in literature I should name, "The Robbers," by Schiller; Victor Hugo's "Les Pauvres Gens" and "Les Misérables"; the novels and stories of Dickens, — "The Tale of Two Cities," "The Christmas Carol," "The Chimes," and others; "Uncle Tom's Cabin;" Dostoievsky's works — especially his "Memoirs from the House of Death"; and "Adam Bede," by George Eliot.

In modern painting, strange to say, works of this kind, directly transmitting the Christian feeling of love of God and of one's neighbor, are hardly to be found, especially among the works of the celebrated painters. There are plenty of pictures treating of the gospel stories; they, however, depict historical events with great wealth of detail, but do not, and cannot, transmit religious feeling not possessed by their painters. There are many pictures treating of the personal feelings of various people, but of pictures representing great deeds of self-sacrifice and of Christian love there are very few, and what there are, are principally by artists who are not celebrated,

and are, for the most part, not pictures, but merely sketches. Such, for instance, is the drawing by Kramskoy (worth many of his finished pictures), showing a drawing-room with a balcony, past which troops are marching in triumph on their return from the war. On the balcony stands a wet-nurse holding a baby and a boy. They are admiring the procession of the troops, but the mother, covering her face with a handkerchief, has fallen back on the sofa, sobbing. Such also is the picture by Walter Langley, to which I have already referred, and such again is a picture by the French artist Morlon, depicting a lifeboat hastening, in a heavy storm, to the relief of a steamer that is being wrecked. Approaching these in kind are pictures which represent the hard-working peasant with respect and love. Such are the pictures by Millet, and, particularly, his drawing, "The Man with the Hoe"; also pictures in this style by Jules Breton, L'Hermitte, Defregger, and others. As examples of pictures evoking indignation and horror at the violation of love to God and man, Gay's picture, "Judgment," may serve, and also Leizen-Mayer's, "Signing the Death Warrant." But there are also very few of this kind. Anxiety about the technique and the beauty of the picture for the most part obscures the feeling. For instance, Gérôme's "Pollice Verso" expresses, not so much horror at what is being perpetrated as attraction by the beauty of the spectacle.[1]

To give examples, from the modern art of our upper classes, of art of the second kind, good universal art or even of the art of a whole people, is yet more difficult, especially in literary art and music. If there are some works which by their inner contents might be assigned to this class (such as "Don Quixote," Molière's comedies, "David Copperfield" and "The Pickwick Papers" by Dickens, Gogol's and Pushkin's tales, and some things of Maupassant's), these works are for the most part — from the exceptional nature of the feelings they

[1] In this picture the spectators in the Roman Amphitheater are turning down their thumbs to show that they wish the vanquished gladiator to be killed. — Tr.

transmit, and the superfluity of special details of time and locality, and, above all, on account of the poverty of their subject-matter in comparison with examples of universal ancient art (such, for instance, as the story of Joseph) — comprehensible only to people of their own circle. That Joseph's brethren, being jealous of his father's affection, sell him to the merchants; that Potiphar's wife wishes to tempt the youth; that having attained the highest station, he takes pity on his brothers, including Benjamin, the favorite, — these and all the rest are feelings accessible alike to a Russian peasant, a Chinese, an African, a child, or an old man, educated or uneducated; and it is all written with such restraint, is so free from any superfluous detail, that the story may be told to any circle and will be equally comprehensible and touching to every one. But not such are the feelings of Don Quixote or of Molière's heroes (though Molière is perhaps the most universal, and therefore the most excellent, artist of modern times), nor of Pickwick and his friends. These feelings are not common to all men, but very exceptional; and therefore, to make them infectious, the authors have surrounded them with abundant details of time and place. And this abundance of detail makes the stories difficult of comprehension to all people not living within reach of the conditions described by the author.

The author of the novel of Joseph did not need to describe in detail, as would be done nowadays, the blood-stained coat of Joseph, the dwelling and dress of Jacob, the pose and attire of Potiphar's wife, and how, adjusting the bracelet on her left arm, she said, "Come to me," and so on, because the subject-matter of feelings in this novel is so strong that all details, except the most essential, — such as that Joseph went out into another room to weep, — are superfluous, and would only hinder the transmission of feelings. And therefore this novel is accessible to all men, touches people of all nations and classes, young and old, and has lasted to our times, and will yet last for thousands of years to come. But strip the best novels of our times of their details, and what will remain?

It is therefore impossible in modern literature to indicate works fully satisfying the demands of universality. Such works as exist are, to a great extent, spoilt by what is usually called "realism," but would be better termed "provincialism," in art.

In music the same occurs as in verbal art, and for similar reasons. In consequence of the poorness of the feeling they contain, the melodies of the modern composers are amazingly empty and insignificant. And to strengthen the impression produced by these empty melodies, the new musicians pile complex modulations on to each trivial melody, not only in their own national manner, but also in the way characteristic of their own exclusive circle and particular musical school. Melody — every melody — is free, and may be understood of all men; but as soon as it is bound up with a particular harmony, it ceases to be accessible except to people trained to such harmony, and it becomes strange, not only to common men of another nationality, but to all who do not belong to the circle whose members have accustomed themselves to certain forms of harmonization. So that music, like poetry, travels in a vicious circle. Trivial and exclusive melodies, in order to make them attractive, are laden with harmonic, rhythmic, and orchestral complications, and thus become yet more exclusive; and, far from being universal, are not even national, *i.e.* they are not comprehensible to the whole people but only to some people.

In music, besides marches and dances by various composers, which satisfy the demands of universal art, one can indicate very few works of this class: Bach's famous violin *aria*, Chopin's nocturne in E-flat major, and perhaps a dozen bits (not whole pieces, but parts) selected from the works of Haydn, Mozart, Schubert, Beethoven, and Chopin.[1]

[1] While offering as examples of art those that seem to me the best, I attach no special importance to my selection; for, besides being insufficiently informed in all branches of art, I belong to the class of people whose taste has, by false training, been perverted. And there-

Although in painting the same thing is repeated as in poetry and music, — namely, that in order to make them more interesting, works weak in conception are surrounded by minutely studied accessories of time and place, which give them a temporary and local interest but make them less universal, — still, in painting, more than in the other spheres of art, may be found works satisfying the demands of universal Christian art; that is to say, there are more works expressing feelings in which all men may participate.

In the arts of painting and sculpture, all pictures and statues in so-called genre style, depictions of animals, landscapes and caricatures with subjects comprehensible to every one, and also all kinds of ornaments, are universal in subject-matter. Such productions in painting and sculpture are very numerous (*e.g.* china dolls), but for the most part such objects (for instance, ornaments of all kinds) are either not considered to be art or are considered to be art of a low quality. In reality all such objects, if only they transmit a true feeling experienced by the artist and comprehensible to every one (however insignificant it may seem to us to be) are works of real good Christian art.

I fear it will here be urged against me that having denied that the conception of beauty can supply a standard for works of art, I contradict myself by acknowledging ornaments to be works of good art. The reproach is unjust, for the subject-matter of all kinds of ornamentation consists not in the beauty, but in the feeling (of admiration of, and delight in, the combination of lines and colors) which the artist has experienced and with which he infects the spectator. Art remains what

fore my old, inured habits may cause me to err, and I may mistake for absolute merit the impression a work produced on me in my youth. My only purpose in mentioning examples of works of this or that class is to make my meaning clearer, and to show how, with my present views, I understand excellence in art in relation to its subject-matter. I must, moreover, mention that I consign my own artistic productions to the category of bad art, excepting the story "God sees the Truth," which seeks a place in the first class, and "The Prisoner of the Caucasus," which belongs to the second.

it was and what it must be: nothing but the infection by one man of another, or of others, with the feelings experienced by the infector. Among those feelings is the feeling of delight at what pleases the sight. Objects pleasing the sight may be such as please a small or a large number of people, or such as please all men. And ornaments for the most part are of the latter kind. A landscape representing a very unusual view, or a genre picture of a special subject, may not please every one, but ornaments, from Yakutsk ornaments to Greek ones, are intelligible to every one and evoke a similar feeling of admiration in all, and therefore this despised kind of art should, in Christian society, be esteemed far above exceptional, pretentious pictures and sculptures.

So that there are only two kinds of good Christian art: all the rest of art not comprised in these two divisions should be acknowledged to be bad art, deserving not to be encouraged, but to be driven out, denied, and despised, as being art not uniting but dividing people. Such, in literary art, are all novels and poems which transmit Church or patriotic feelings, and also exclusive feelings pertaining only to the class of the idle rich; such as aristocratic honor, satiety, spleen, pessimism, and refined and vicious feelings flowing from sex-love — quite incomprehensible to the great majority of mankind.

In painting we must similarly place in the class of bad art all the Church, patriotic, and exclusive pictures; all the pictures representing the amusements and allurements of a rich and idle life; all the so-called symbolic pictures, in which the very meaning of the symbol is comprehensible only to the people of a certain circle; and, above all, pictures with voluptuous subjects — all that odious female nudity which fills all the exhibitions and galleries. And to this class belongs almost all the chamber and opera music of our times, — beginning especially from Beethoven (Schumann, Berlioz, Liszt, Wagner), by its subject-matter devoted to the expression of feelings accessible only to people who have developed in themselves an unhealthy, nervous irrita-

tion evoked by this exclusive, artificial, and complex music.

"What! the '*Ninth Symphony*' not a good work of art!" I hear exclaimed by indignant voices.

And I reply, Most certainly it is not. All that I have written I have written with the sole purpose of finding a clear and reasonable criterion by which to judge the merits of works of art. And this criterion, coinciding with the indications of plain and sane sense, indubitably shows me that that symphony by Beethoven is not a good work of art. Of course, to people educated in the adoration of certain productions and of their authors, to people whose taste has been perverted just by being educated in such adoration, the acknowledgment that such a celebrated work is bad is amazing and strange. But how are we to escape the indications of reason and of common sense?

Beethoven's "Ninth Symphony" is considered a great work of art. To verify its claim to be such, I must first ask myself whether this work transmits the highest religious feeling? I reply in the negative, for music in itself cannot transmit those feelings; and therefore I ask myself next, Since this work does not belong to the highest kind of religious art, has it the other characteristic of the good art of our time,—the quality of uniting all men in one common feeling: does it rank as Christian universal art? And again I have no option but to reply in the negative; for not only do I not see how the feelings transmitted by this work could unite people not specially trained to submit themselves to its complex hypnotism, but I am unable to imagine to myself a crowd of normal people who could understand anything of this long, confused, and artificial production, except short snatches which are lost in a sea of what is incomprehensible. And therefore, whether I like it or not, I am compelled to conclude that this work belongs to the rank of bad art. It is curious to note in this connection, that attached to the end of this very symphony is a poem of Schiller's which (though somewhat obscurely) expresses this very thought, namely, that feeling (Schil-

ler speaks only of the feeling of gladness) unites people and evokes love in them. But though this poem is sung at the end of the symphony, the music does not accord with the thought expressed in the verses; for the music is exclusive and does not unite all men, but unites only a few, dividing them off from the rest of mankind.

And just in this same way, in all branches of art, many and many works considered great by the upper classes of our society will have to be judged. By this one sure criterion we shall have to judge the celebrated "Divine Comedy" and "Jerusalem Delivered," and a great part of Shakespear's and Goethe's works, and in painting every representation of miracles, including Raphael's "Transfiguration," etc.

Whatever the work may be and however it may have been extolled, we have first to ask whether this work is one of real art or a counterfeit. Having acknowledged, on the basis of the indication of its infectiousness even to a small class of people, that a certain production belongs to the realm of art, it is necessary, on the basis of the indication of its accessibility, to decide the next question, Does this work belong to the category of bad, exclusive art, opposed to religious perception, or to Christian art, uniting people? And having acknowledged an article to belong to real Christian art, we must then, according to whether it transmits the feelings flowing from love to God and man, or merely the simple feelings uniting all men, assign it a place in the ranks of religious art or in those of universal art.

Only on the basis of such verification shall we find it possible to select from the whole mass of what, in our society, claims to be art, those works which form real, important, necessary spiritual food, and to separate them from all the harmful and useless art, and from the counterfeits of art which surround us. Only on the basis of such verification shall we be able to rid ourselves of the pernicious results of harmful art, and to avail ourselves of that beneficent action which is the purpose of true and good art, and which is indispensable for the spiritual life of man and of humanity.

CHAPTER XVII

Art is one of two organs of human progress. By words man interchanges thoughts, by the forms of art he interchanges feelings, and this with all men, not only of the present time, but also of the past and the future. It is natural to human beings to employ both these organs of intercommunication, and therefore the perversion of either of them must cause evil results to the society in which it occurs. And these results will be of two kinds: first, the absence, in that society, of the work which should be performed by the organ; and secondly, the harmful activity of the perverted organ. And just these results have shown themselves in our society. The organ of art has been perverted, and therefore the upper classes of society have, to a great extent, been deprived of the work that it should have performed. The diffusion in our society of enormous quantities of, on the one hand, those counterfeits of art which only serve to amuse and corrupt people, and, on the other hand, of works of insignificant, exclusive art, mistaken for the highest art, have perverted most men's capacity to be infected by true works of art, and have thus deprived them of the possibility of experiencing the highest feelings to which mankind has attained, and which can only be transmitted from man to man by art.

All the best that has been done in art by man remains strange to people who lack the capacity to be infected by art, and is replaced either by spurious counterfeits of art or by insignificant art, which they mistake for real art. People of our time and of our society are delighted with Baudelaires, Verlaines, Moréases, Ibsens, and Maeterlincks in poetry; with Monets, Manets, Puvis de Chavannes, Burne-Joneses, Stucks, and Böcklins in painting; with Wagners, Liszts, Richard Strausses, in music; and they are no longer capable of comprehending either the highest or the simplest art.

In the upper classes, in consequence of this loss of

capacity to be infected by works of art, people grow up, are educated, and live, lacking the fertilizing, improving influence of art, and therefore not only do not advance toward perfection, do not become kinder, but, on the contrary, possessing highly developed external means of civilization, they yet tend to become continually more savage, more coarse, and more cruel.

Such is the result of the absence from our society of the activity of that essential organ — art. But the consequences of the perverted activity of that organ are yet more harmful. And they are numerous.

The first consequence, plain for all to see, is the enormous expenditure of the labor of working people on things which are not only useless, but which, for the most part, are harmful; and more than that, the waste of priceless human lives on this unnecessary and harmful business. It is terrible to consider with what intensity, and amid what privations, millions of people — who lack time and opportunity to attend to what they and their families urgently require — labor for 10, 12, or 14 hours on end, and even at night, setting the type for pseudo-artistic books which spread vice among mankind, or working for theaters, concerts, exhibitions, and picture-galleries, which, for the most part, also serve vice; but it is yet more terrible to reflect that lively, kindly children, capable of all that is good, are devoted from their early years to such tasks as these: that for 6, 8, or 10 hours a day, and for 10 or 15 years, some of them should play scales and exercises; others should twist their limbs, walk on their toes, and lift their legs above their heads; a third set should sing solfeggios; a fourth set, showing themselves off in all manner of ways, should pronounce verses; a fifth set should draw from busts or from nude models and paint studies; a sixth set should write compositions according to the rules of certain periods; and that in these occupations, unworthy of a human being, which are often continued long after full maturity, they should waste their physical and mental strength and lose all perception of the meaning of life. It is often said that

it is horrible and pitiful to see little acrobats putting their legs over their necks, but it is not less pitiful to see children of 10 giving concerts, and it is still worse to see school-boys of 10 who, as a preparation for literary work, have learnt by heart the exceptions to the Latin grammar. These people not only grow physically and mentally deformed, but also morally deformed, and become incapable of doing anything really needed by man. Occupying in society the rôle of amusers of the rich, they lose their sense of human dignity, and develop in themselves such a passion for public applause that they are always a prey to an inflated and unsatisfied vanity which grows in them to diseased dimensions, and they expend their mental strength in efforts to obtain satisfaction for this passion. And what is most tragic of all is that these people, who for the sake of art are spoilt for life, not only do not render service to this art, but, on the contrary, inflict the greatest harm on it. They are taught in academies, schools, and conservatoires how to counterfeit art, and by learning this they so pervert themselves that they quite lose the capacity to produce works of real art, and become purveyors of that counterfeit, or trivial, or depraved art which floods our society. This is the first obvious consequence of the perversion of the organ of art.

The second consequence is that the productions of amusement-art, which are prepared in such terrific quantities by the armies of professional artists, enable the rich people of our times to live the lives they do, lives not only unnatural, but in contradiction to the humane principles these people themselves profess. To live as do the rich, idle people, especially the women, far from nature and from animals, in artificial conditions, with muscles atrophied or misdeveloped by gymnastics, and with enfeebled vital energy, would be impossible were it not for what is called art — for this occupation and amusement which hides from them the meaninglessness of their lives, and saves them from the dullness that oppresses them. Take from all these people the

theaters, concerts, exhibitions, piano-playing, songs, and novels with which they now fill their time, in full confidence that occupation with these things is a very refined, æsthetical, and therefore good occupation; take from the patrons of art who buy pictures, assist musicians, and are acquainted with writers, their rôle of protectors of that important matter art, and they will not be able to continue such a life, but will all be eaten up by ennui and spleen, and will become conscious of the meaninglessness and wrongness of their present mode of life. Only occupation with what, among them, is considered art renders it possible for them to continue to live on, infringing all natural conditions, without perceiving the emptiness and cruelty of their lives. And this support afforded to the false manner of life pursued by the rich is the second consequence, and a serious one, of the perversion of art.

The third consequence of the perversion of art is the perplexity produced in the minds of children and of plain folk. Among people not perverted by the false theories of our society, among workers and children, there exists a very definite conception of what people may be respected and praised for. In the minds of peasants and children the ground for praise or eulogy can only be either physical strength: Hercules, the heroes and conquerors; or moral, spiritual, strength: Sakya Muni giving up a beautiful wife and a kingdom to save mankind, Christ going to the cross for the truth he professed, and all the martyrs and the saints. Both are understood by peasants and children. They understand that physical strength must be respected, for it compels respect; and the moral strength of goodness an unperverted man cannot fail to respect, because all his spiritual being draws him toward it. But these people, children, and peasants, suddenly perceive that besides those praised, respected, and rewarded for physical or moral strength, there are others who are praised, extolled, and rewarded much more than the heroes of strength and virtue, merely because they sing well, compose verses, or dance. They see that singers,

composers, painters, ballet-dancers, earn millions of roubles and receive more honor than the saints do: and peasants and children are perplexed.

When fifty years had elapsed after Pushkin's death, and, simultaneously, the cheap edition of his works began to circulate among the people and a monument was erected to him in Moscow, I received more than a dozen letters from different peasants asking why Pushkin was raised to such dignity. And only the other day a literate [1] man from Saratoff called on me who had evidently gone out of his mind over this very question. He was on his way to Moscow to expose the clergy for having taken part in raising a "monament" to Mr. Pushkin.

Indeed, one need only imagine to oneself what the state of mind of such a man of the people must be when he learns, from such rumors and newspapers as reach him, that the clergy, the Government officials, and all the best people in Russia are triumphantly unveiling a statue to a great man, the benefactor, the pride of Russia — Pushkin, of whom till then he had never heard. From all sides he reads or hears about this, and he naturally supposes that if such honors are rendered to any one, then without doubt he must have done something extraordinary — either some feat of strength or of goodness. He tries to learn who Pushkin was, and having discovered that Pushkin was neither a hero nor a general, but was a private person and a writer, he comes to the conclusion that Pushkin must have been a holy man and a teacher of goodness, and he hastens to read or to hear his life and works. But what must be his perplexity when he learns that Pushkin was a man of more than easy morals, who was killed in a duel, *i.e.* when attempting to murder another man, and that all his service consisted in writing verses about love, which were often very indecent.

That a hero, or Alexander the Great, or Genghis

[1] In Russian it is customary to make a distinction between literate and illiterate people, *i.e.* between those who can and those who cannot read. *Literate* in this sense does not imply that the man would speak or write correctly. — Tr.

Khan, or Napoleon were great, he understands, because any one of them could have crushed him and a thousand like him; that Buddha, Socrates, and Christ were great he also understands, for he knows and feels that he and all men should be such as they were; but why a man should be great because he wrote verses about the love of women he cannot make out.

A similar perplexity must trouble the brain of a Breton or Norman peasant who hears that a monument, "*une statue*" (as to the Madonna), is being erected to Baudelaire, and reads, or is told, what the contents of his "Fleurs du Mal" are; or, more amazing still, to Verlaine, when he learns the story of that man's wretched, vicious life, and reads his verses. And what confusion it must cause in the brains of peasants when they learn that some Patti or Taglioni is paid £10,000 for a season, or that a painter gets as much for a picture, or that authors of novels describing love-scenes have received even more than that.

And it is the same with children. I remember how I passed through this stage of amazement and stupefaction, and only reconciled myself to this exaltation of artists to the level of heroes and saints by lowering in my own estimation the importance of moral excellence, and by attributing a false, unnatural meaning to works of art. And a similar confusion must occur in the soul of each child and each man of the people when he learns of the strange honors and rewards that are lavished on artists. This is the third consequence of the false relation in which our society stands toward art.

The fourth consequence is that people of the upper classes, more and more frequently encountering the contradictions between beauty and goodness, put the ideal of beauty first, thus freeing themselves from the demands of morality. These people, reversing the rôles, instead of admitting, as is really the case, that the art they serve is an antiquated affair, allege that morality is an antiquated affair, which can have no importance for people situated on that high plane of development on which they opine that they are situated.

This result of the false relation to art showed itself in our society long ago; but recently, with its prophet Nietzsche and his adherents, and with the decadents and certain English æsthetes who coincide with him, it is being expressed with especial impudence. The decadents, and æsthetes of the type at one time represented by Oscar Wilde, select as a theme for their productions the denial of morality and the laudation of vice.

This art has partly generated, and partly coincides with, a similar philosophic theory. I recently received from America a book entitled, "The Survival of the Fittest: Philosophy of Power," 1896, by Ragnar Redbeard, Chicago. The substance of this book, as it is expressed in the editor's preface, is that to measure "right" by the false philosophy of the Hebrew prophets and "weepful" Messiahs is madness. Right is not the offspring of doctrine, but of power. All laws, commandments, or doctrines as to not doing to another what you do not wish done to you, have no inherent authority whatever, but receive it only from the club, the gallows, and the sword. A man truly free is under no obligation to obey any injunction, human or divine. Obedience is the sign of the degenerate. Disobedience is the stamp of the hero. Men should not be bound by moral rules invented by their foes. The whole world is a slippery battlefield. Ideal justice demands that the vanquished should be exploited, emasculated, and scorned. The free and brave may seize the world. And, therefore, there should be eternal war for life, for land, for love, for women, for power, and for gold. (Something similar was said a few years ago by the celebrated and refined academician, Vogüé.) The earth and its treasures is "booty for the bold."

The author has evidently by himself, independently of Nietzsche, come to the same conclusions which are professed by the new artists.

Expressed in the form of a doctrine these positions startle us. In reality they are implied in the ideal of art serving beauty. The art of our upper classes has

educated people in this ideal of the over-man,[1] — which is, in reality, the old ideal of Nero, Stenka Razin,[2] Genghis Khan, Robert Macaire,[3] or Napoleon, and all their accomplices, assistants, and adulators — and it supports this ideal with all its might.

It is this supplanting of the ideal of what is right by the ideal of what is beautiful, *i.e.* of what is pleasant, that is the fourth consequence, and a terrible one, of the perversion of art in our society. It is fearful to think of what would befall humanity were such art to spread among the masses of the people. And it already begins to spread.

Finally, the fifth and chief result is, that the art which flourishes in the upper classes of European society has a directly vitiating influence, infecting people with the worst feelings and with those most harmful to humanity, — superstition, patriotism, and, above all, sensuality.

Look carefully into the causes of the ignorance of the masses, and you may see that the chief cause does not at all lie in the lack of schools and libraries, as we are accustomed to suppose, but in those superstitions, both ecclesiastical and patriotic, with which the people are saturated, and which are unceasingly generated by all the methods of art. Church superstitions are supported

[1] The over-man (Uebermensch), in the Nietzschean philosophy, is that superior type of man whom the struggle for existence is to evolve, and who will seek only his own power and pleasure, will know nothing of pity, and will have the right, because he will possess the power, to make ordinary people serve him. — Tr.

[2] Stenka Razin was by origin a common Cossack. His brother was hung for a breach of military discipline, and to this event Stenka Razin's hatred of the governing classes has been attributed. He formed a robber band, and subsequently headed a formidable rebellion, declaring himself in favor of freedom for the serfs, religious toleration, and the abolition of taxes. Like the government he opposed, he relied on force, and, though he used it largely in defense of the poor against the rich, he still held to

> "The good old rule, the simple plan,
> That they should take who have the power,
> And they should keep who can."

Like Robin Hood, he is favorably treated in popular legends. — Tr.

[3] Robert Macaire is a modern type of adroit and audacious rascality. He was the hero of a popular play produced in Paris in 1834. — Tr.

and produced by the poetry of prayers, hymns, painting, by the sculpture of images and of statues, by singing, by organs, by music, by architecture, and even by dramatic art in religious ceremonies. Patriotic superstitions are supported and produced by verses and stories, which are supplied even in schools, by music, by songs, by triumphal processions, by royal meetings, by martial pictures, and by monuments.

Were it not for this continual activity in all departments of art, perpetuating the ecclesiastical and patriotic intoxication and embitterment of the people, the masses would long ere this have attained to true enlightenment.

But it is not only in Church matters and patriotic matters that art depraves; it is art in our time that serves as the chief cause of the perversion of people in the most important question of social life, — in their sexual relations. We nearly all know by our own experience, and those who are fathers and mothers know in the case of their grown-up children also, what fearful mental and physical suffering, what useless waste of strength, people suffer merely as a consequence of dissoluteness in sexual desire.

Since the world began, since the Trojan war, which sprang from that same sexual dissoluteness, down to and including the suicides and murders of lovers described in almost every newspaper, a great proportion of the sufferings of the human race have come from this source.

And what is art doing? All art, real and counterfeit, with very few exceptions, is devoted to describing, depicting, and inflaming sexual love in every shape and form. When one remembers all those novels and their lust-kindling descriptions of love, from the most refined to the grossest, with which the literature of our society overflows; if one only remembers all those pictures and statues representing women's naked bodies, and all sorts of abominations which are reproduced in illustrations and advertisements; if one only remembers all the filthy operas and operettas, songs, and *romances* with which our world teems, involuntarily it seems as if existing art

had but one definite aim, — to disseminate vice as widely as possible.

Such, though not all, are the most direct consequences of that perversion of art which has occurred in our society. So that what in our society is called art not only does not conduce to the progress of mankind, but, more than almost anything else, hinders the attainment of goodness in our lives.

And therefore the question which involuntarily presents itself to every man free from artistic activity and therefore not bound to existing art by self-interest, the question asked by me at the beginning of this work: Is it just that to what we call art, to a something belonging to but a small section of society, should be offered up such sacrifices of human labor, of human lives, and of goodness as are now being offered up? receives the natural reply: No; it is unjust, and these things should not be! So also replies sound sense and unperverted moral feeling. Not only should these things not be, not only should no sacrifices be offered up to what among us is called art, but, on the contrary, the efforts of those who wish to live rightly should be directed toward the destruction of this art, for it is one of the most cruel of the evils that harass our section of humanity. So that, were the question put: Would it be preferable for our Christian world to be deprived of *all* that is now esteemed to be art, and, together with the false, to lose *all* that is good in it? I think that every reasonable and moral man would again decide the question as Plato decided it for his "Republic," and as all the Church Christian and Mohammedan teachers of mankind decided it, *i.e.* would say, "Rather let there be no art at all than continue the depraving art, or simulation of art, which now exists." Happily, no one has to face this question, and no one need adopt either solution. All that man can do, and that we — the so-called educated people, who are so placed that we have the possibility of understanding the meaning of the phenomena of our life — can and should do, is to understand the error we are involved in, and not harden our hearts in it, but seek for a way of escape.

CHAPTER XVIII

The cause of the lie into which the art of our society has fallen was that people of the upper classes, having ceased to believe in the Church teaching (called Christian), did not resolve to accept true Christian teaching in its real and fundamental principles of sonship to God and brotherhood to man, but continued to live on without any belief, endeavoring to make up for the absence of belief — some by hypocrisy, pretending still to believe in the nonsense of the Church creeds; others by boldly asserting their disbelief; others by refined agnosticism; and others, again, by returning to the Greek worship of beauty, proclaiming egotism to be right, and elevating it to the rank of a religious doctrine.

The cause of the malady was the non-acceptance of Christ's teaching in its real, *i.e.* its full, meaning. And the only cure for the illness lies in acknowledging that teaching in its full meaning. And such acknowledgment in our time is not only possible, but inevitable. Already to-day a man, standing on the height of the knowledge of our age, whether he be nominally a Catholic or a Protestant, cannot say that he really believes in the dogmas of the Church: in God being a Trinity, in Christ being God, in the scheme of redemption, and so forth; nor can he satisfy himself by proclaiming his unbelief or skepticism, nor by relapsing into the worship of beauty and egotism. Above all, he can no longer say that we do not know the real meaning of Christ's teaching. That meaning has not only become accessible to all men of our times, but the whole life of man to-day is permeated by the spirit of that teaching, and, consciously or unconsciously, is guided by it.

However differently in form people belonging to our Christian world may define the destiny of man; whether they see it in human progress in whatever sense of the words, in the union of all men in a socialistic realm, or in the establishment of a commune; whether they look forward to the union of mankind under the guidance of

one universal Church, or to the federation of the world, — however various in form their definitions of the destination of human life may be, all men in our times already admit that the highest well-being attainable by men is to be reached by their union with one another.

However people of our upper classes (feeling that their ascendancy can only be maintained as long as they separate themselves — the rich and learned — from the laborers, the poor, and the unlearned) may seek to devise new conceptions of life by which their privileges may be perpetuated, — now the ideal of returning to antiquity, now mysticism, now Hellenism, now the cult of the superior person (over-man-ism), — they have, willingly or unwillingly, to admit the truth which is elucidating itself from all sides, voluntarily and involuntarily, namely, that our welfare lies only in the unification and the brotherhood of man.

Unconsciously this truth is confirmed by the construction of means of communication, — telegraphs, telephones, the press, and the ever increasing attainability of material well-being for every one, — and consciously it is affirmed by the destruction of superstitions which divide men, by the diffusion of the truths of knowledge, and by the expression of the ideal of the brotherhood of man in the best works of art of our time.

Art is a spiritual organ of human life which cannot be destroyed, and therefore, notwithstanding all the efforts made by people of the upper classes to conceal the religious ideal by which humanity lives, that ideal is more and more clearly recognized by man, and even in our perverted society is more and more often partially expressed by science and by art. During the present century works of the higher kind of religious art have appeared more and more frequently, both in literature and in painting, permeated by a truly Christian spirit, as also works of the universal art of common life, accessible to all. So that even art knows the true ideal of our times, and tends toward it. On the one hand, the best works of art of our times transmit religious feelings urging toward the union and the brotherhood of man (such

are the works of Dickens, Hugo, Dostoievsky; and in painting, of Millet, Bastien Lepage, Jules Breton, L'Hermitte, and others); on the other hand, they strive toward the transmission, not of feelings which are natural to people of the upper classes only, but of such feelings as may unite every one without exception. There are as yet few such works, but the need of them is already acknowledged. In recent times we also meet more and more frequently with attempts at publications, pictures, concerts, and theaters for the people. All this is still very far from accomplishing what should be done, but already the direction in which good art instinctively presses forward to regain the path natural to it can be discerned.

The religious perception of our time — which consists in acknowledging that the aim of life (both collective and individual) is the union of mankind — is already so sufficiently distinct that people have now only to reject the false theory of beauty, according to which enjoyment is considered to be the purpose of art, and religious perception will naturally take its place as the guide of the art of our time.

And as soon as the religious perception, which already unconsciously directs the life of man, is consciously acknowledged, then immediately and naturally the division of art, into art for the lower and art for the upper classes, will disappear. There will be one common, brotherly, universal art; and first, that art will naturally be rejected which transmits feelings incompatible with the religious perception of our time, — feelings which do not unite, but divide men, — and then that insignificant, exclusive art will be rejected to which an importance is now attached to which it has no right.

And as soon as this occurs, art will immediately cease to be what it has been in recent times, — a means of making people coarser and more vicious; and it will become, what it always used to be and should be, a means by which humanity progresses toward unity and blessedness.

Strange as the comparison may sound, what has hap-

pened to the art of our circle and time is what happens to a woman who sells her womanly attractiveness, intended for maternity, for the pleasure of those who desire such pleasures.

The art of our time and of our circle has become a prostitute. And this comparison holds good even in minute details. Like her it is not limited to certain times, like her it is always adorned, like her it is always salable, and like her it is enticing and ruinous.

A real work of art can only arise in the soul of an artist occasionally as the fruit of the life he has lived, just as a child is conceived by its mother. But counterfeit art is produced by artisans and handicraftsmen continually, if only consumers can be found.

Real art, like the wife of an affectionate husband, needs no ornaments. But counterfeit art, like a prostitute, must always be decked out.

The cause of the production of real art is the artist's inner need to express a feeling that has accumulated, just as for a mother the cause of sexual conception is love. The cause of counterfeit art, as of prostitution, is gain.

The consequence of true art is the introduction of a new feeling into the intercourse of life, as the consequence of a wife's love is the birth of a new man into life.

The consequences of counterfeit art are the perversion of man, pleasure which never satisfies, and the weakening of man's spiritual strength.

And this is what people of our day and of our circle should understand, in order to avoid the filthy torrent of depraved and prostituted art with which we are deluged.

CHAPTER XIX

People talk of the art of the future, meaning by "art of the future" some especially refined, new art, which, as they imagine, will be developed out of that exclusive art of one class which is now considered the highest art. But no such new art of the future can or will be found. Our exclusive art, that of the upper classes of Christen-

dom, has found its way into a blind alley. The direction in which it has been going leads nowhere. Having once let go of that which is most essential for art (namely, the guidance given by religious perception), that art has become ever more and more exclusive, and therefore ever more and more perverted, until, finally, it has come to nothing. The art of the future, that which is really coming, will not be a development of present-day art, but will arise on completely other and new foundations, having nothing in common with those by which our present art of the upper classes is guided.

Art of the future, that is to say, such part of art as will be chosen from among all the art diffused among mankind, will consist, not in transmitting feelings accessible only to members of the rich classes, as is the case to-day, but in transmitting such feelings as embody the highest religious perception of our times. Only those productions will be considered art which transmit feelings drawing men together in brotherly union, or such universal feelings as can unite all men. Only such art will be chosen, tolerated, approved, and diffused. But art transmitting feelings flowing from antiquated, worn-out religious teaching, — Church art, patriotic art, voluptuous art, transmitting feelings of superstitious fear, of pride, of vanity, of ecstatic admiration of national heroes, — art exciting exclusive love of one's own people, or sensuality, will be considered bad, harmful art, and will be censured and despised by public opinion. All the rest of art, transmitting feelings accessible only to a section of people, will be considered unimportant, and will be neither blamed nor praised. And the appraisement of art in general will devolve, not, as is now the case, on a separate class of rich people, but on the whole people; so that for a work to be esteemed good, and to be approved of and diffused, it will have to satisfy the demands, not of a few people living in identical and often unnatural conditions, but it will have to satisfy the demands of all those great masses of people who are situated in the natural conditions of laborious life.

And the artists producing art will also not be, as now,

merely a few people selected from a small section of the nation, members of the upper classes or their hangers-on, but will consist of all those gifted members of the whole people who prove capable of, and are inclined toward, artistic activity.

Artistic activity will then be accessible to all men. It will become accessible to the whole people, because, in the first place, in the art of the future, not only will that complex technique, which deforms the productions of the art of to-day and requires so great an effort and expenditure of time, not be demanded, but, on the contrary, the demand will be for clearness, simplicity, and brevity — conditions mastered, not by mechanical exercises, but by the education of taste. And secondly, artistic activity will become accessible to all men of the people because, instead of the present professional schools which only some can enter, all will learn music and depictive art (singing and drawing) equally with letters in the elementary schools, and in such a way that every man, having received the first principles of drawing and music, and feeling a capacity for, and a call to, one or other of the arts, will be able to perfect himself in it.

People think that if there are no special art schools the technique of art will deteriorate. Undoubtedly, if by technique we understand those complications of art which are now considered an excellence, it will deteriorate; but if by technique is understood clearness, beauty, simplicity, and compression in works of art, then, even if the elements of drawing and music were not to be taught in the national schools, the technique will not only not deteriorate, but, as is shown by all peasant art, will be a hundred times better. It will be improved, because all the artists of genius now hidden among the masses will become producers of art and will give models of excellence, which (as has always been the case) will be the best schools of technique for their successors. For every true artist, even now, learns his technique, chiefly, not in the schools, but in life, from the examples of the great masters; then — when the producers of art will be the best artists of the whole nation, and there

will be more such examples, and they will be more accessible — such part of the school training as the future artist will lose will be a hundredfold compensated for by the training he will receive from the numerous examples of good art diffused in society.

Such will be one difference between present and future art. Another difference will be that art will not be produced by professional artists receiving payment for their work and engaged on nothing else besides their art. The art of the future will be produced by all the members of the community who feel the need of such activity, but they will occupy themselves with art only when they feel such need.

In our society people think that an artist will work better, and produce more, if he has a secured maintenance. And this opinion would serve once more to show clearly, were such demonstration still needed, that what among us is considered art is not art, but only its counterfeit. It is quite true that for the production of boots or loaves division of labor is very advantageous, and that the bootmaker or baker who need not prepare his own dinner or fetch his own fuel will make more boots or loaves than if he had to busy himself about these matters. But art is not a handicraft; it is the transmission of feeling the artist has experienced. And sound feeling can only be engendered in a man when he is living on all its sides the life natural and proper to mankind. And therefore security of maintenance is a condition most harmful to an artist's true productiveness, since it removes him from the condition natural to all men, — that of struggle with nature for the maintenance of both his own life and that of others, — and thus deprives him of opportunity and possibility to experience the most important and natural feelings of man. There is no position more injurious to an artist's productiveness than that position of complete security and luxury in which artists usually live in our society.

The artist of the future will live the common life of man, earning his subsistence by some kind of labor. The fruits of that highest spiritual strength which passes

through him he will try to share with the greatest possible number of people, for in such transmission to others of the feelings that have arisen in him he will find his happiness and his reward. The artist of the future will be unable to understand how an artist, whose chief delight is in the wide diffusion of his works, could give them only in exchange for a certain payment.

Until the dealers are driven out, the temple of art will not be a temple. But the art of the future will drive them out.

And therefore the subject-matter of the art of the future, as I imagine it to myself, will be totally unlike that of to-day. It will consist, not in the expression of exclusive feelings: pride, spleen, satiety, and all possible forms of voluptuousness, available and interesting only to people who, by force, have freed themselves from the labor natural to human beings; but it will consist in the expression of feelings experienced by a man living the life natural to all men and flowing from the religious perception of our times, or of such feelings as are open to all men without exception.

To people of our circle who do not know and cannot or will not understand the feelings which will form the subject-matter of the art of the future, such subject-matter appears very poor in comparison with those subtleties of exclusive art with which they are now occupied. "What is there fresh to be said in the sphere of the Christian feeling of love of one's fellow-man? The feelings common to every one are so insignificant and monotonous," think they. And yet, in our time, the really fresh feelings can only be religious, Christian feelings, and such as are open, accessible, to all. The feelings flowing from the religious perception of our times, Christian feelings, are infinitely new and varied, only not in the sense some people imagine, — not that they can be evoked by the depiction of Christ and of gospel episodes, or by repeating in new forms the Christian truths of unity, brotherhood, equality, and love, — but in that all the oldest, commonest, and most hackneyed phenomena of life evoke the newest, most unexpected, and touching

emotions as soon as a man regards them from the Christian point of view.

What can be older than the relations between married couples, of parents to children, of children to parents; the relations of men to their fellow-countrymen and to foreigners, to an invasion, to defense, to property, to the land, or to animals? But as soon as a man regards these matters from the Christian point of view, endlessly varied, fresh, complex, and strong emotions immediately arise.

And, in the same way, that realm of subject-matter for the art of the future which relates to the simplest feelings of common life open to all will not be narrowed, but widened. In our former art only the expression of feelings natural to people of a certain exceptional position was considered worthy of being transmitted by art, and even then only on condition that these feelings were transmitted in a most refined manner, incomprehensible to the majority of men; all the immense realm of folk-art, and children's art — jests, proverbs, riddles, songs, dances, children's games, and mimicry — was not esteemed a domain worthy of art.

The artist of the future will understand that to compose a fairy-tale, a little song which will touch, a lullaby or a riddle which will entertain, a jest which will amuse, or to draw a sketch which will delight dozens of generations or millions of children and adults, is incomparably more important and more fruitful than to compose a novel or a symphony, or paint a picture which will divert some members of the wealthy classes for a short time, and then be forever forgotten. The region of this art of the simple feelings accessible to all is enormous, and it is as yet almost untouched.

The art of the future, therefore, will not be poorer, but infinitely richer in subject-matter. And the form of the art of the future will also not be inferior to the present forms of art, but infinitely superior to them. Superior, not in the sense of having a refined and complex technique, but in the sense of the capacity briefly, simply, and clearly to transmit, without any

superfluities, the feeling which the artist has experienced and wishes to transmit.

I remember once speaking to a famous astronomer who had given public lectures on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, and saying it would be a good thing if, with his knowledge and masterly delivery, he would give a lecture merely on the formation and movements of the earth, for certainly there were many people at his lecture on the spectrum analysis of the stars of the Milky Way, especially among the women, who did not well know why night follows day and summer follows winter. The wise astronomer smiled as he answered, "Yes, it would be a good thing, but it would be very difficult. To lecture on the spectrum analysis of the Milky Way is far easier."

And so it is in art. To write a rhymed poem dealing with the times of Cleopatra, or paint a picture of Nero burning Rome, or compose a symphony in the manner of Brahms or Richard Strauss, or an opera like Wagner's, is far easier than to tell a simple story without any unnecessary details, yet so that it should transmit the feelings of the narrator, or to draw a pencil-sketch which should touch or amuse the beholder, or to compose four bars of clear and simple melody, without any accompaniment, which should convey an impression and be remembered by those who hear it.

"It is impossible for us, with our culture, to return to a primitive state," say the artists of our time. "It is impossible for us now to write such stories as that of Joseph or the 'Odyssey,' to produce such statues as the Venus of Milo, or to compose such music as the folk-songs."

And indeed, for the artists of our society and day, it is impossible, but not for the future artist, who will be free from all the perversion of technical improvements hiding the absence of subject-matter, and who, not being a professional artist and receiving no payment for his activity, will only produce art when he feels impelled to do so by an irresistible inner impulse.

The art of the future will thus be completely distinct, both in subject-matter and in form, from what is now called art. The only subject-matter of the art of the future will be either feelings drawing men toward union, or such as already unite them; and the forms of art will be such as will be open to every one. And therefore, the ideal of excellence in the future will not be the exclusiveness of feeling, accessible only to some, but, on the contrary, its universality. And not bulkiness, obscurity, and complexity of form, as is now esteemed, but, on the contrary, brevity, clearness, and simplicity of expression. Only when art has attained to that, will art neither divert nor deprave men as it does now, calling on them to expend their best strength on it, but be what it should be, — a vehicle wherewith to transmit religious, Christian perception from the realm of reason and intellect into that of feeling, and really drawing people in actual life nearer to that perfection and unity indicated to them by their religious perception.

CHAPTER XX

THE CONCLUSION

I HAVE accomplished, to the best of my ability, this work which has occupied me for fifteen years, on a subject near to me — that of art. By saying that this subject has occupied me for fifteen years, I do not mean that I have been writing this book fifteen years, but only that I began to write on art fifteen years ago, thinking that when once I undertook the task I should be able to accomplish it without a break. It proved, however, that my views on the matter then were so far from clear that I could not arrange them in a way that satisfied me. From that time I have never ceased to think on the subject, and I have recommenced to write on it six or seven times; but each time, after writing a considerable part of it, I have found myself unable to bring the

work to a satisfactory conclusion, and have had to put it aside. Now I have finished it; and however badly I may have performed the task, my hope is that my fundamental thought as to the false direction the art of our society has taken and is following, as to the reasons of this, and as to the real destination of art, is correct, and that therefore my work will not be without avail. But that this should come to pass, and that art should really abandon its false path and take the new direction, it is necessary that another equally important human spiritual activity, — science, — in intimate dependence on which art always rests, should abandon the false path which it too, like art, is following.

Science and art are as closely bound together as the lungs and the heart, so that if one organ is vitiated the other cannot act rightly.

True science investigates and brings to human perception such truths and such knowledge as the people of a given time and society consider most important. Art transmits these truths from the region of perception to the region of emotion. Therefore, if the path chosen by science be false, so also will be the path taken by art. Science and art are like a certain kind of barge with kedge-anchors which used to ply on our rivers. Science, like the boats which took the anchors up-stream and made them secure, gives direction to the forward movement; while art, like the windlass worked on the barge to draw it toward the anchor, causes the actual progression. And thus a false activity of science inevitably causes a correspondingly false activity of art.

As art in general is the transmission of every kind of feeling, but in the limited sense of the word we only call that art which transmits feelings acknowledged by us to be important, so also science in general is the transmission of all possible knowledge; but in the limited sense of the word we call science that which transmits knowledge acknowledged by us to be important.

And the degree of importance, both of the feelings transmitted by art and of the information transmitted by science, is decided by the religious perception of the given

time and society, *i.e.* by the common understanding of the purpose of their lives possessed by the people of that time or society.

That which most of all contributes to the fulfilment of that purpose will be studied most; that which contributes less will be studied less; that which does not contribute at all to the fulfilment of the purpose of human life will be entirely neglected, or, if studied, such study will not be accounted science. So it always has been, and so it should be now; for such is the nature of human knowledge and of human life. But the science of the upper classes of our time, which not only does not acknowledge any religion, but considers every religion to be mere superstition, could not and cannot make such distinctions.

Scientists of our day affirm that they study *everything* impartially; but as everything is too much (is in fact an infinite number of objects), and as it is impossible to study all alike, this is only said in the theory, while in practice not everything is studied, and study is applied far from impartially, only that being studied which, on the one hand, is most wanted by, and on the other hand, is pleasantest to, those people who occupy themselves with science. And what the people, belonging to the upper classes, who are occupying themselves with science most want is the maintenance of the system under which those classes retain their privileges; and what is pleasantest are such things as satisfy idle curiosity, do not demand great mental efforts, and can be practically applied.

And therefore one side of science, including theology and philosophy adapted to the existing order, as also history and political economy of the same sort, are chiefly occupied in proving that the existing order is the very one which ought to exist; that it has come into existence and continues to exist by the operation of immutable laws not amenable to human will, and that all efforts to change it are therefore harmful and wrong. The other part, experimental science, — including mathematics, astronomy, chemistry, physics, botany, and all the natural sciences, — is exclusively occupied with

things that have no direct relation to human life: with what is curious, and with things of which practical application advantageous to people of the upper classes can be made. And to justify that selection of objects of study which (in conformity to their own position) the men of science of our times have made, they have devised a theory of science for science's sake, quite similar to the theory of art for art's sake.

As by the theory of art for art's sake it appears that occupation with all those things that please us — is art, so, by the theory of science for science's sake, the study of that which interests us — is science.

So that one side of science, instead of studying how people should live in order to fulfil their mission in life, demonstrates the righteousness and immutability of the bad and false arrangements of life which exist around us; while the other part, experimental science, occupies itself with questions of simple curiosity or with technical improvements.

The first of these divisions of science is harmful, not only because it confuses people's perceptions and gives false decisions, but also because it exists, and occupies the ground which should belong to true science. It does this harm, that each man, in order to approach the study of the most important questions of life, must first refute these erections of lies which have during ages been piled around each of the most essential questions of human life, and which are propped up by all the strength of human ingenuity.

The second division — the one of which modern science is so particularly proud, and which is considered by many people to be the only real science — is harmful in that it diverts attention from the really important subjects to insignificant subjects, and is also directly harmful in that, under the evil system of society which the first division of science justifies and supports, a great part of the technical gains of science are turned, not to the advantage, but to the injury of mankind.

Indeed, it is only to those who are devoting their lives to such study that it seems as if all the inventions which

are made in the sphere of natural science were very important and useful things. And to these people it seems so only when they do not look around them and do not see what is really important. They only need tear themselves away from the psychological microscope under which they examine the objects of their study, and look about them, in order to see how insignificant is all that has afforded them such naïve pride, all that knowledge not only of geometry of *n*-dimensions, spectrum analysis of the Milky Way, the form of atoms, dimensions of human skulls of the Stone Age, and similar trifles, but even our knowledge of micro-organisms, X-rays, etc., in comparison with such knowledge as we have thrown aside and handed over to the perversions of the professors of theology, jurisprudence, political economy, financial science, etc. We need only look around us to perceive that the activity proper to real science is not the study of whatever happens to interest us, but the study of how man's life should be established, — the study of those questions of religion, morality, and social life, without the solution of which all our knowledge of nature will be harmful or insignificant.

We are highly delighted and very proud that our science renders it possible to utilize the energy of a waterfall and make it work in factories, or that we have pierced tunnels through mountains, and so forth. But the pity of it is that we make the force of the waterfall labor, not for the benefit of the workmen, but to enrich capitalists who produce articles of luxury or weapons of man-destroying war. The same dynamite with which we blast the mountains to pierce tunnels we use for wars, from which latter we not only do not intend to abstain, but which we consider inevitable, and for which we unceasingly prepare.

If we are now able to inoculate preventatively with diphtheritic microbes, to find a needle in a body by means of X-rays, to straighten a hunched-back, cure syphilis, and perform wonderful operations, we should not be proud of these acquisitions either (even were they all established beyond dispute) if we fully under-

stood the true purpose of real science. If but one-tenth of the efforts now spent on objects of pure curiosity or of merely practical application were expended on real science organizing the life of man, more than half the people now sick would not have the illnesses from which a small minority of them now get cured in hospitals. There would be no poor-blooded and deformed children growing up in factories, no death-rates, as now, of fifty per cent among children, no deterioration of whole generations, no prostitution, no syphilis, and no murdering of hundreds of thousands in wars, nor those horrors of folly and of misery which our present science considers a necessary condition of human life.

We have so perverted the conception of science that it seems strange to men of our day to allude to sciences which should prevent the mortality of children, prostitution, syphilis, the deterioration of whole generations, and the wholesale murder of men. It seems to us that science is only then real science when a man in a laboratory pours liquids from one jar into another, or analyzes the spectrum, or cuts up frogs and porpoises, or weaves in a specialized, scientific jargon an obscure network of conventional phrases — theological, philosophical, historical, juridical, or politico-economical — semi-intelligible to the man himself, and intended to demonstrate that what now is, is what should be.

But science, true science, — such science as would really deserve the respect which is now claimed by the followers of one (the least important) part of science, — is not at all such as this: real science lies in knowing what we should and what we should not believe, in knowing how the associated life of man should and should not be constituted; how to treat sexual relations, how to educate children, how to use the land, how to cultivate it oneself without oppressing other people, how to treat foreigners, how to treat animals, and much more that is important for the life of man.

Such has true science ever been and such it should be. And such science is springing up in our times; but, on the one hand, such true science is denied and refuted by

all those scientific people who defend the existing order of society, and, on the other hand, it is considered empty, unnecessary, unscientific science by those who are engrossed in experimental science.

For instance, books and sermons appear, demonstrating the antiquatedness and absurdity of Church dogmas, as well as the necessity of establishing a reasonable religious perception suitable to our times, and all the theology that is considered to be real science is only engaged in refuting these works and in exercising human intelligence again and again to find support and justification for superstitions long since outlived, and which have now become quite meaningless. Or a sermon appears showing that land should not be an object of private possession, and that the institution of private property in land is a chief cause of the poverty of the masses. Apparently science, real science, should welcome such a sermon and draw further deductions from this position. But the science of our times does nothing of the kind: on the contrary, political economy demonstrates the opposite position; namely, that landed property, like every other form of property, must be more and more concentrated in the hands of a small number of owners. Again, in the same way, one would suppose it to be the business of real science to demonstrate the irrationality, unprofitableness, and immorality of war and of executions; or the inhumanity and harmfulness of prostitution; or the absurdity, harmfulness, and immorality of using narcotics or of eating animals; or the irrationality, harmfulness, and antiquatedness of patriotism. And such works exist, but are all considered unscientific; while works to prove that all these things ought to continue, and works intended to satisfy an idle thirst for knowledge lacking any relation to human life, are considered to be scientific.

The deviation of the science of our time from its true purpose is strikingly illustrated by those ideals which are put forward by some scientists, and are not denied, but admitted, by the majority of scientific men.

These ideals are expressed not only in stupid, fashion-

able books, describing the world as it will be in 1000 or 3000 years' time, but also by sociologists who consider themselves serious men of science. These ideals are that food, instead of being obtained from the land by agriculture, will be prepared in laboratories by chemical means, and that human labor will be almost entirely superseded by the utilization of natural forces.

Man will not, as now, eat an egg laid by a hen he has kept, or bread grown on his field, or an apple from a tree he has reared and which has blossomed and matured in his sight; but he will eat tasty, nutritious, food which will be prepared in laboratories by the conjoint labor of many people in which he will take a small part. Man will hardly need to labor, so that all men will be able to yield to idleness as the upper, ruling classes now yield to it.

Nothing shows more plainly than these ideals to what a degree the science of our times has deviated from the true path.

The great majority of men in our times lack good and sufficient food (as well as dwellings and clothes and all the first necessaries of life). And this great majority of men is compelled, to the injury of its well-being, to labor continually beyond its strength. Both these evils can easily be removed by abolishing mutual strife, luxury, and the unrighteous distribution of wealth, in a word, by the abolition of a false and harmful order and the establishment of a reasonable, human manner of life. But science considers the existing order of things to be as immutable as the movements of the planets, and therefore assumes that the purpose of science is — not to elucidate the falseness of this order and to arrange a new, reasonable way of life — but, under the existing order of things, to feed everybody and enable all to be as idle as the ruling classes, who live a depraved life, now are.

And, meanwhile, it is forgotten that nourishment with corn, vegetables, and fruit raised from the soil by one's own labor is the pleasantest, healthiest, easiest, and most natural nourishment, and that the work of using one's

muscles is as necessary a condition of life as is the oxidation of the blood by breathing.

To invent means whereby people might, while continuing our false division of property and labor, be well nourished by means of chemically prepared food, and might make the forces of nature work for them, is like inventing means to pump oxygen into the lungs of a man kept in a closed chamber, the air of which is bad, when all that is needed is to cease to confine the man in the closed chamber.

In the vegetable and animal kingdoms a laboratory for the production of food has been arranged, such as can be surpassed by no professors, and to enjoy the fruits of this laboratory, and to participate in it, man has only to yield to that ever joyful impulse to labor, without which man's life is a torment. And lo and behold! the scientists of our times, instead of employing all their strength to abolish whatever hinders man from utilizing the good things prepared for him, acknowledge the conditions under which man is deprived of these blessings to be unalterable, and instead of arranging the life of man so that he might work joyfully and be fed from the soil, they devise methods which will cause him to become an artificial abortion. It is like not helping a man out of confinement into the fresh air, but devising means, instead, to pump into him the necessary quantity of oxygen and arranging so that he may live in a stifling cellar instead of living at home.

Such false ideals could not exist if science were not on a false path.

And yet the feelings transmitted by art grow up on the bases supplied by science.

But what feelings can such misdirected science evoke? One side of this science evokes antiquated feelings, which humanity has used up, and which, in our times, are bad and exclusive. The other side, occupied with the study of subjects unrelated to the conduct of human life, by its very nature cannot serve as a basis for art.

So that art in our times, to be art, must either open up its own road independently of science, or must take

direction from the unrecognized science which is denounced by the orthodox section of science. And this is what art, when it even partially fulfils its mission, is doing.

It is to be hoped that the work I have tried to perform concerning art will be performed also for science — that the falseness of the theory of science for science's sake will be demonstrated; that the necessity of acknowledging Christian teaching in its true meaning will be clearly shown, that on the basis of that teaching a reappraisement will be made of the knowledge we possess, and of which we are so proud; that the secondariness and insignificance of experimental science, and the primacy and importance of religious, moral, and social knowledge will be established; and that such knowledge will not, as now, be left to the guidance of the upper classes only, but will form a chief interest of all free, truth-loving men, such as those who, not in agreement with the upper classes, but in their despite, have always forwarded the real science of life.

Astronomical, physical, chemical, and biological science, as also technical and medical science, will be studied only in so far as they can help to free mankind from religious, juridical, or social deceptions, or can serve to promote the well-being of all men, and not of any single class.

Only then will science cease to be what it is now, — on the one hand a system of sophistries, needed for the maintenance of the existing worn-out order of society, and, on the other hand, a shapeless mass of miscellaneous knowledge, for the most part good for little or nothing, — and become a shapely and organic whole, having a definite and reasonable purpose comprehensible to all men; namely, the purpose of bringing to the consciousness of men the truths that flow from the religious perception of our times.

And only then will art, which is always dependent on science, be what it might and should be, an organ coequally important with science for the life and progress of mankind.

Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter. Art is an organ of human life, transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling. In our age the common religious perception of men is the consciousness of the brotherhood of man — we know that the well-being of man lies in union with his fellowmen. True science should indicate the various methods of applying this consciousness to life. Art should transform this perception into feeling.

The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science guided by religion, that peaceful coöperation of man which is now obtained by external means — by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection, etc. — should be obtained by man's free and joyous activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside.

And it is only art that can accomplish this.

All that now, independently of the fear of violence and punishment, makes the social life of man possible (and already now this is an enormous part of the order of our lives) — all this has been brought about by art. If by art it has been inculcated how people should treat religious objects, their parents, their children, their wives, their relations, strangers, foreigners; how to conduct themselves to their elders, their superiors, to those who suffer, to their enemies, and to animals; and if this has been obeyed through generations by millions of people, not only unenforced by any violence, but so that the force of such customs can be shaken in no way but by means of art — then, by the same art, other customs, more in accord with the religious perception of our time, may be evoked. If art has been able to convey the sentiment of reverence for images, for the eucharist, and for the king's person; of shame at betraying a comrade, devotion to a flag, the necessity of revenge for an insult, the need to sacrifice one's labor for the erection and adornment of churches, the duty of defending one's honor or the glory of one's native land — then that same art can also evoke reverence for the dignity of every man and for the life of every animal; can make

men ashamed of luxury, of violence, of revenge, or of using for their pleasure that of which others are in need; can compel people freely, gladly, and without noticing it, to sacrifice themselves in the service of man.

The task for art to accomplish is to make that feeling of brotherhood and love of one's neighbor, now attained only by the best members of society, the customary feeling and the instinct of all men. By evoking, under imaginary conditions, the feeling of brotherhood and love, religious art will train men to experience those same feelings under similar circumstances in actual life; it will lay in the souls of men the rails along which the actions of those whom art thus educates will naturally pass. And universal art, by uniting the most different people in one common feeling, by destroying separation, will educate people to union, will show them, not by reason, but by life itself, the joy of universal union reaching beyond the bounds set by life.

The destiny of art in our time is to transmit from the realm of reason to the realm of feeling the truth that well-being for men consists in being united together, and to set up, in place of the existing reign of force, that kingdom of God, *i.e.* of love, which we all recognize to be the highest aim of human life.

Possibly, in the future, science may reveal to art yet newer and higher ideals, which art may realize; but, in our time, the destiny of art is clear and definite. The task for Christian art is to establish brotherly union among men.

APPENDIX I

This is the first page of Mallarmé's book, "Divagations":—

LE PHÉNOMÈNE FUTUR

Un ciel pâle, sur le monde qui finit de décrépitude, va peut-être partir avec les nuages: les lambeaux de la pourpre usée des couchants déteignent dans une rivière dormant à l'horizon

submergé de rayons et d'eau. Les arbres s'ennuient, et, sous leur feuillage blanchi (de la poussière du temps plutôt que celle des chemins) monte la maison en toile de Montreur de choses Passées : maint réverbère attend le crépuscule et ravive les visages d'une malheureuse foule, vaincue par la maladie immortelle et le péché des siècles, d'hommes près de leurs chétives complices enceintes des fruits misérables avec lesquels périra la terre. Dans le silence inquiet de tous les yeux suppliant làbas le soleil qui, sous l'eau, s'enfonce avec le désespoir d'un cri, voici le simple boniment : " Nulle enseigne ne vous régale du spectacle intérieur, car il n'est pas maintenant un peintre capable d'en donner une ombre triste. J'apporte, vivante (et préservée à travers les ans par la science souveraine) une Femme d'autrefois. Quelque folie, originelle et naïve, une extase d'or, je ne sais quoi ! par elle nommé sa chevelure, se ploie avec la grâce des étoffes autour d'un visage qu' éclaire la nudité sanglante de ses lèvres. A la place du vêtement vain, elle a un corps ; et les yeux, semblables aux pierres rares ! ne valent pas ce regard qui sort de sa chair heureuse : des seins levés comme s'ils étaient pleins d'un lait éternel, la pointe vers le ciel, les jambes lisses qui gardent le sel de la mer première." Se rappelant leurs pauvres épouses, chauves, morbides et pleines d'horreur, les maris se pressent : elles aussi par curiosité, mélancoliques, veulent voir.

Quand tous auront contemplé la noble créature, vestige de quelque époque déjà maudite, les uns indifférents, car ils n'auront pas eu la force de comprendre, mais d'autres navrés et la paupière humide de larmes résignées, se regarderont ; tandis que les poètes de ces temps, sentant se rallumer leur yeux éteints, s'achemineront vers leur lampe, le cerveau ivre un instant d'une gloire confuse, hantés du Rythme et dans l'oubli d'exister à une époque qui survit à la beauté.

THE FUTURE PHENOMENON — BY MALLARMÉ.

A pale sky, above the world that is ending through decrepitude, going, perhaps, to pass away with the clouds : shreds of worn-out purple of the sunsets wash off their color in a river sleeping on the horizon, submerged with rays and water. The trees are weary and, beneath their foliage, whitened (by the dust of time rather than that of the roads), rises the canvas house of " Showman of things Past." Many a lamp awaits the gloaming, and brightens the faces of a miserable crowd vanquished by the immortal illness and the sin of ages, of men by the sides of their puny accomplices pregnant with

the miserable fruit with which the world will perish. In the anxious silence of all the eyes supplicating the sun there, which sinks under the water with the desperation of a cry, this is the plain announcement: "No sign-board now regales you with the spectacle that is inside, for there is no painter now capable of giving even a shadow of it. I bring living (and preserved by sovereign science through the years) a Woman of other days. Some kind of folly, naïve and original, an ecstasy of gold, I know not what, by her called her hair, clings with the grace of some material round a face brightened by the blood-red nudity of her lips. In place of vain clothing, she has a body; and her eyes, resembling precious stones! are not worth that look, which comes from her happy flesh: breasts raised as if full of eternal milk, the points toward the sky; the smooth legs, that keep the salt of the first sea." Remembering their poor spouses, bald, morbid, and full of horrors, the husbands press forward: the women, too, from curiosity, gloomily wish to see.

When all shall have contemplated the noble creature, vestige of some epoch already damned, some indifferently, for they will not have had strength to understand, but others, broken-hearted, and with eyelids wet with tears of resignation, will look at each other; while the poets of those times, feeling their dim eyes rekindled, will make their way toward their lamp, their brain for an instant drunk with confused glory, haunted by Rhythm, and forgetful that they exist at an epoch which has survived beauty.

APPENDIX II[1]

No. 1

The following verses are by Vielé-Griffin, from page 28 of a volume of his Poems:—

OISEAU BLEU COULEUR DU TEMPS

1

Sait-tu l'oubli
D'un vain doux rêve,
Oiseau moqueur
De la forêt?
Le jour pâlit,
La nuit se lève,
Et dans mon cœur
L'ombre a pleuré;

2

O chante-moi
Ta folle gamme,
Car j'ai dormi
Ce jour durant;
Le lâche emoi
Où fut mon âme
Sanglote ennui
Le jour mourant....

[1] The translations in Appendices I., II., and IV., are by Louise Maude. The aim of these renderings has been to keep as close to the originals as

3

Sais-tu le chant
De sa parole
Et de sa voix,
Toi qui redis
Dans le couchant
Ton air frivole
Comme autrefois
Sous les midis ?

4

O chante alors
La mélodie
De son amour,
Mon fol espoir,
Parmi les ors
Et l'incendie
Du vain doux jour
Qui meurt ce soir.

FRANCIS VIELÉ-GRIFFIN.

BLUE BIRD

1

Canst thou forget,
In dreams so vain,
Oh, mocking bird
Of forest deep?
The day doth set,
Night comes again,
My heart has heard
The shadows weep;

3

That music sweet,
Ah, do you know
Her voice and speech?
Your airs so light
You who repeat
In sunset's glow,
As you sang, each,
At noonday's height.

2

Thy tones let flow
In maddening scale,
For I have slept
The livelong day;
Emotions low
In me now wail,
My soul they 've kept:
Light dies away ....

4

Of my desire,
My hope so bold,
Her love — up, sing,
Sing, 'neath this light,
This flaming fire,
And all the gold
The eve doth bring
Ere comes the night.

No. 2

And here are some verses by the esteemed young poet Verhaeren, which I also take from page 28 of his Works: —

the obscurity of meaning allowed. The sense (or absence of sense) has therefore been more considered than the form of the verses.

ATTIRANCES

Lointainement, et si étrangement pareils,
De grands masques d'argent que la brume recule,
Vaguent, au jour tombant, autour des vieux soleils.

Les doux lointaines ! — et comme, au fond du crépuscule,
Ils nous fixent le cœur, immensément le cœur,
Avec les yeux *défunts de leur* visage d'âme.

C'est toujours du silence, à moins, dans la pâleur
Du soir, un jet de feu sondain, un cri de flamme,
Un départ de lumière inattendu vers Dieu.

On se laisse charmer et troubler de mystère,
Et l'on dirait des morts qui taisent un adieu
Trop mystique, pour être écouté par la terre !

Sont-ils le souvenir matériel et clair
Des éphèbes chrétiens couchés aux catacombes
Parmi les lys? Sont-ils leur regard et leur chair?

Ou seul, ce qui survit de merveilleux aux tombes
De ceux qui sont partis, vers leurs rêves, un soir,
Conquérir la folie à l'assaut des nuées?

Lointainement, combien nous les sentons vouloir
Un peu d'amour pour leurs œuvres destituées,
Pour leur errance et leur tristesse aux horizons.

Toujours ! aux horizons du cœur et des pensées,
Alors que les vieux soirs éclatent en blasons
Soudains, pour les gloires noires et angoissées.

ÉMILE VERHAEREN,
Poèmes.

ATTRACTIONS

Large masks of silver, by mists drawn away,
So strangely alike, yet so far apart,
Float round the old suns when faileth the day.

They transfix our heart, so immensely our heart,
Those distances mild, in the twilight deep,
Looking out of dead faces with their spirit eyes.

All around is now silence, except when there leap
In the pallor of evening, with fiery cries,
Some fountains of flame that God-ward do fly.

Mysterious trouble and charms us infold,
You might think that the dead spoke a silent good-by,
Oh! too mystical far on earth to be told!

Are they the memories, material and bright,
Of the Christian youths that in catacombs sleep
'Mid the lilies? Are they their flesh or their sight?

Or the marvel alone that survives, in the deep,
Of those that, one night, returned to their dream
Of conquering folly by assaulting the skies?

For their destitute works — we feel it seems,
For a little love their longing cries
From horizons far — for their errings and pain.

In horizons ever of heart and thought,
While the evenings old in bright blaze wane
Suddenly, for black glories anguish fraught.

No. 3

And the following is a poem by Moréas, evidently an admirer of Greek beauty. It is from page 28 of a volume of his Poems: —

ENONE AU CLAIR VISAGE

Enone, j'avais cru qu'en aimant ta beauté
Où l'âme avec le corps trouvent leur unité,
J'allais, m'affermissant et le cœur et l'esprit,
Monter jusqu'à cela qui jamais ne périt,
N'ayant été crée, qui n'est froideur ou feu,
Qui n'est beau quelque part et laid en autre lieu;
Et me flattais encor' d'une belle harmonie
Que j'eusse composé du meilleur et du pire,

Ainsi que le chanteur qui chérit Polimnie,
En accordant le grave avec l'aigu, retire
Un son bien élevé sur les nerfs de sa lyre.
Mais mon courage, hélas ! se pâmant comme mort,
M'enseigna que le trait qui m'avait fait amant
Ne fut pas de cet arc que courbe sans effort
La Vénus qui naquit du mâle seulement,
Mais que j'avais souffert cette Vénus dernière,
Qui a le cœur couard, né d'une faible mère.
Et pourtant, ce mauvais garçon, chasseur habile,
Qui charge son carquois de sagette subtile,
Qui secoue en riant sa torche, pour un jour,
Qui ne pose jamais que sur de tendres fleurs,
C'est sur un teint charmant qu'il essuie les pleurs,
Et c'est encore un Dieu, Enone, cet Amour.
Mais, laisse, les oiseaux du printemps sont partis,
Et je vois les rayons du soleil amortis.
Enone, ma douleur, harmonieux visage,
Superbe humilité, doux honnête langage,
Hier me remirant dans cet étang glacé
Qui au bout du jardin se couvre de feuillage,
Sur ma face je vis que les jours ont passé.

JEAN MORÉAS.

ENONE

Enone, in loving thy beauty, I thought,
Where the soul and the body to union are brought,
That mounting by steadying my heart and my mind,
In that which can't perish, myself I should find.
For it ne'er was created, is not ugly and fair;
Is not coldness in one part, while on fire it is there.
Yes, I flattered myself that a harmony fine
I'd succeed to compose of the worst and the best,
Like the bard who adores Polyhymnia divine,
And mingling sounds different from the nerves of his lyre,
From the grave and the smart draws melodies higher.
But, alas! my courage, so faint and nigh spent,
The dart that has struck me proves without fail
Not to be from that bow which is easily bent
By the Venus that 's born alone of the male.
No, 't was that other Venus that caused me to smart,
Born of frail mother with cowardly heart.
And yet that naughty lad, that little hunter bold,

Who laughs and shakes his flowery torch just for a day,
Who never rests but upon tender flowers and gay,
On sweetest skin who dries the tears his eyes that fill,
Yet oh, Enone mine, a God 's that Cupid still.
Let it pass ; for the birds of the Spring are away,
And dying I see the sun's lingering ray.
Enone, my sorrow, oh, harmonious face,
Humility grand, words of virtue and grace,
I looked yestere'en in the pond frozen fast,
Strewn with leaves at the end of the garden's fair space,
And I read in my face that those days are now past.

No. 4

And this is also from page 28 of a thick book, full of similar poems, by M. Montesquiou.

BERCEUSE D'OMBRE

Des formes, des formes, des formes
Blanche, bleue, et rose, et d'or
Descendront du haut des ormes
Sur l'enfant qui se rendort.
Des formes !

Des plumes, des plumes, des plumes
Pour composer un doux nid.
Midi sonne : les enclumes
Cessent ; la rumeur finit ....
Des plumes !

Des roses, des roses, des roses
Pour embaumer son sommeil,
Vos pétales sont moroses
Près du sourire vermeil.
O roses !

Des ailes, des ailes, des ailes
Pour bourdonner à son front,
Abeilles et demoiselles,
Des rythmes qui berceront.
Des ailes !

Des branches, des branches, des branches
Pour tresser un pavillon,
Par où des clartés moins franches
Descendront sur l'oisillon.
Des branches !

Des songes, des songes, des songes
Dans ses pensers entr' ouverts
Glissez un peu de mensonges
A voir le vie au travers
Des songes !

Des fées, des fées, des fées
Pour filer leurs écheveaux
Des mirages, de bouffées
Dans tous ces petits cerveaux.
Des fées !

Des anges, des anges, des anges
Pour emporter dans l'éther
Les petits enfants étranges
Qui ne veulent pas rester ....
Nos anges !

COMTE ROBERT DE MONTESQUIOU-FEZENSAC,
Les Hortensias Bleus.

THE SHADOW LULLABY

Oh forms, oh forms, oh forms
White, blue, and gold, and red
Descending from the elm trees,
On sleeping baby's head.
Oh forms!

Oh feathers, feathers, feathers
To make a cozy nest.
Twelve striking: stops the clamor;
The anvils are at rest ....
Oh feathers !

Oh roses, roses, roses
To scent his sleep awhile,

Pale are your fragrant petals
Beside his ruby smile.
Oh roses!

Oh wings, oh wings, oh wings
Of bees and dragon-flies,
To hum around his forehead,
And lull him with your sighs.
Oh wings!

Branches, branches, branches
A shady bower to twine,
Through which, oh daylight, faintly
Descend on birdie mine.
Branches!

Oh dreams, oh dreams, oh dreams
Into his opening mind,
Let in a little falsehood
With sights of life behind.
Dreams!

Oh fairies, fairies, fairies
To twine and twist their threads
With puffs of phantom visions
Into these little heads.
Fairies!

Angels, angels, angels
To the ether far away,
Those children strange to carry
That here don't wish to stay ....
Our angels!

APPENDIX III

These are the contents of "The Nibelung's Ring":—

The first part tells that the nymphs, the daughters of the Rhine, for some reason guard gold in the Rhine, and sing: Weia, Waga, Woge du Welle, Walle zur Wiege, Wagala-weia, Wallala, Weiala, Weia, and so forth.

These singing nymphs are pursued by a gnome (a nibelung) who desires to seize them. The gnome cannot catch any of them. Then the nymphs guarding

the gold tell the gnome just what they ought to keep secret, namely, that whoever renounces love will be able to steal the gold they are guarding. And the gnome renounces love, and steals the gold. This ends the first scene.

In the second scene a god and a goddess lie in a field in sight of a castle which giants have built for them. Presently they wake up and are pleased with the castle, and they relate that in payment for this work they must give the goddess Freia to the giants. The giants come for their pay. But the god Wotan objects to parting with Freia. The giants get angry. The gods hear that the gnome has stolen the gold, promise to confiscate it, and to pay the giants with it. But the giants won't trust them, and seize the goddess Freia in pledge.

The third scene takes place underground. The gnome Alberich, who stole the gold, for some reason beats a gnome, Mime, and takes from him a helmet which has the power both of making people invisible and of turning them into other animals. The gods, Wotan and others, appear and quarrel with one another and with the gnomes, and wish to take the gold, but Alberich won't give it up, and (like everybody all through the piece) behaves in a way to insure his own ruin. He puts on the helmet, and becomes first a dragon and then a toad. The gods catch the toad, take the helmet off it, and carry Alberich away with them.

Scene IV. The gods bring Alberich to their home, and order him to command his gnomes to bring them all the gold. The gnomes bring it. Alberich gives up the gold, but keeps a magic ring. The gods take the ring. So Alberich curses the ring, and says it is to bring misfortune on any one who has it. The giants appear; they bring the goddess Freia, and demand her ransom. They stick up staves of Freia's height, and gold is poured in between these staves: this is to be the ransom. There is not enough gold, so the helmet is thrown in, and they also demand the ring. Wotan refuses to give it up, but

the goddess Erda appears and commands him to do so, because it brings misfortune. Wotan gives it up. Freia is released. The giants, having received the ring, fight, and one of them kills the other. This ends the Prelude, and we come to the First Day.

The scene shows a house in a tree. Siegmund runs in tired, and lies down. Sieglinda, the mistress of the house (and wife of Hunding), gives him a drugged draught, and they fall in love with each other. Sieglinda's husband comes home, learns that Siegmund belongs to a hostile race, and wishes to fight him next day; but Sieglinda drugs her husband, and comes to Siegmund. Siegmund discovers that Sieglinda is his sister, and that his father drove a sword into the tree so that no one can get it out. Siegmund pulls the sword out, and commits incest with his sister.

Act II. Siegmund is to fight with Hunding. The gods discuss the question to whom they shall award the victory. Wotan, approving of Siegmund's incest with his sister, wishes to spare him, but, under pressure from his wife, Fricka, he orders the Valkyrie Brünnhilda to kill Siegmund. Siegmund goes to fight; Sieglinda faints. Brünnhilda appears and wishes to slay Siegmund. Siegmund wishes to kill Sieglinda also, but Brünnhilda does not allow it; so he fights with Hunding. Brünnhilda defends Siegmund, but Wotan defends Hunding. Siegmund's sword breaks, and he is killed. Sieglinda runs away.

Act III. The Valkyries (divine Amazons) are on the stage. The Valkyrie Brünnhilda arrives on horseback, bringing Siegmund's body. She is flying from Wotan, who is chasing her for her disobedience. Wotan catches her, and as a punishment dismisses her from her post as a Valkyrie. He casts a spell on her, so that she has to go to sleep and to continue asleep until a man wakes her. When some one wakes her she will fall in love with him. Wotan kisses her; she falls asleep. He lets off fire, which surrounds her.

We now come to the Second Day. The gnome Mime forges a sword in a wood. Siegfried appears. He is a

son born from the incest of brother with sister (Siegmund with Sieglinda), and has been brought up in this wood by the gnome. In general the motives of the actions of everybody in this production are quite unintelligible. Siegfried learns his own origin, and that the broken sword was his father's. He orders Mime to reforge it, and then goes off. Wotan comes in the guise of a wanderer, and relates what will happen: that he who has not learnt to fear will forge the sword, and will defeat everybody. The gnome conjectures that this is Siegfried, and wants to poison him. Siegfried returns, forges his father's sword, and runs off, shouting, Heiho! heiho! heiho! Ho! ho! Aha! oho! aha! Heiaho! heiaho! heiaho! Ho! ho! Hahei! hoho! hahei!

And we get to Act II. Alberich sits guarding a giant, who, in form of a dragon, guards the gold he has received. Wotan appears, and for some unknown reason foretells that Siegfried will come and kill the dragon. Alberich wakes the dragon, and asks him for the ring, promising to defend him from Siegfried. The dragon won't give up the ring. Exit Alberich. Mime and Siegfried appear. Mime hopes the dragon will teach Siegfried to fear. But Siegfried does not fear. He drives Mime away and kills the dragon, after which he puts his finger, smeared with the dragon's blood, to his lips. This enables him to know men's secret thoughts, as well as the language of birds. The birds tell him where the treasure and the ring are, and also that Mime wishes to poison him. Mime returns, and says out loud that he wishes to poison Siegfried. This is meant to signify that Siegfried, having tasted dragon's blood, understands people's secret thoughts. Siegfried, having learnt Mime's intentions, kills him. The birds tell Siegfried where Brünnhilda is, and he goes to find her.

Act III. Wotan calls up Erda. Erda prophesies to Wotan, and gives him advice. Siegfried appears, quarrels with Wotan, and they fight. Suddenly Siegfried's sword breaks Wotan's spear, which had been more powerful than anything else. Siegfried goes into

the fire to Brünnhilda: kisses her; she wakes up, abandons her divinity, and throws herself into Siegfried's arms.

Third Day. Prelude. Three Norns plait a golden rope, and talk about the future. They go away. Siegfried and Brünnhilda appear. Siegfried takes leave of her, gives her the ring, and goes away.

Act I. By the Rhine. A king wants to get married, and also to give his sister in marriage. Hagen, the king's wicked brother, advises him to marry Brünnhilda and to give his sister to Siegfried. Siegfried appears; they give him a drugged draught, which makes him forget all the past and fall in love with the king's sister, Gutrune. So he rides off with Gunther, the king, to get Brünnhilda to be the king's bride. The scene changes. Brünnhilda sits with the ring. A Valkyrie comes to her and tells her that Wotan's spear is broken, and advises her to give the ring to the Rhine nymphs. Siegfried comes, and by means of the magic helmet turns himself into Gunther, demands the ring from Brünnhilda, seizes it, and drags her off to sleep with him.

Act II. By the Rhine. Alberich and Hagen discuss how to get the ring. Siegfried comes, tells how he has obtained a bride for Gunther and spent the night with her, but put a sword between himself and her. Brünnhilda rides up, recognizes the ring on Siegfried's hand, and declares that it was he, and not Gunther, who was with her. Hagen stirs everybody up against Siegfried, and decides to kill him next day when hunting.

Act III. Again the nymphs in the Rhine relate what has happened. Siegfried, who has lost his way, appears. The nymphs ask him for the ring, but he won't give it up. Hunters appear. Siegfried tells the story of his life. Hagen then gives him a draught, which causes his memory to return to him. Siegfried relates how he aroused and obtained Brünnhilda, and every one is astonished. Hagen stabs him in the back, and the scene is changed. Gutrune meets the corpse of Siegfried. Gunther and Hagen quarrel about the ring, and

Hagen kills Gunther. Brünnhilda cries. Hagen wishes to take the ring from Siegfried's hand, but the hand of the corpse raises itself threateningly. Brünnhilda takes the ring from Siegfried's hand, and when Siegfried's corpse is carried to the pyre, she gets on to a horse and leaps into the fire. The Rhine rises, and the waves reach the pyre. In the river are three nymphs. Hagen throws himself into the fire to get the ring, but the nymphs seize him and carry him off. One of them holds the ring; and that is the end of the matter.

The impression obtainable from my recapitulation is, of course, incomplete. But however incomplete it may be, it is certainly infinitely more favorable than the impression which results from reading the four booklets in which the work is printed.

APPENDIX IV

Translations of French poems and prose quoted in Chapter X.

BAUDELAIRE'S "FLOWERS OF EVIL"

No. XXIV

I adore thee as much as the vaults of night,
O vase full of grief, taciturnity great,
And I love thee the more because of thy flight.
It seemeth, my night's beautifier, that you
Still heap up those leagues — yes! ironically heap!
That divide from my arms the immensity blue.

I advance to attack, I climb to assault,
Like a choir of young worms at a corpse in the vault;
Thy coldness, oh cruel, implacable beast!
Yet heightens thy beauty, on which my eyes feast!

BAUDELAIRE'S "FLOWERS OF EVIL"

No. XXXVI

DUELLUM

Two warriors come running, to fight they begin,
With gleaming and blood they bespatter the air;
These games, and this clatter of arms, is the din
Of youth that 's a prey to the surgings of love.

The rapiers are broken! and so is our youth,
But the dagger's avenged, dear! and so is the sword,
By the nail that is steeled and the hardened tooth.
Oh, the fury of hearts aged and ulcered by love!

In the ditch, where the ounce and the pard have their lair,
Our heroes have rolled in an angry embrace;
Their skin blooms on brambles that erewhile were bare.

That ravine is a friend-inhabited hell!
Then let us roll in, oh woman inhuman,
To immortalize hatred that nothing can quell!

FROM BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE WORK ENTITLED "LITTLE POEMS"

THE STRANGER

Whom dost thou love best? say, enigmatical man — thy father, thy mother, thy brother, or thy sister?

"I have neither father, nor mother, nor sister, nor brother."

Thy friends?

"You there use an expression the meaning of which till now remains unknown to me."

Thy country?

"I ignore in what latitude it is situated."

Beauty?

"I would gladly love her, goddess and immortal."

Gold?

"I hate it as you hate God."

Then what do you love, extraordinary stranger?

"I love the clouds .... the clouds that pass .... there .... the marvelous clouds!"

BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE POEM

THE SOUP AND THE CLOUDS

My beloved little silly was giving me my dinner, and I was contemplating, through the open window of the dining-room, those moving architectures which God makes out of vapors, the marvelous constructions of the impalpable. And I said to myself, amid my contemplations, "All these phantasmagoria are almost as beautiful as the eyes of my beautiful beloved, the monstrous little silly with the green eyes."

Suddenly I felt the violent blow of a fist on my back, and I heard a harsh, charming voice, an hysterical voice, as it were hoarse with brandy, the voice of my dear little well-beloved, saying, "Are you going to eat your soup soon, you d—— b—— of a dealer in clouds?"

BAUDELAIRE'S PROSE POEM

THE GALLANT MARKSMAN

As the carriage was passing through the forest, he ordered it to be stopped near a shooting-gallery, saying that he wished to shoot off a few bullets to *kill* Time. To kill this monster, is it not the most ordinary and the most legitimate occupation of every one? And he gallantly offered his arm to his dear, delicious, and execrable wife — that mysterious woman to whom he owed so much pleasure, so much pain, and perhaps also a large part of his genius.

Several bullets struck far from the intended mark — one even penetrated the ceiling; and as the charming creature laughed madly, mocking her husband's awkwardness, he turned abruptly toward her and said, "Look at that doll there on the right with the haughty mien and her nose in the air; well, dear angel, *I imagine to myself that it is you!*" And he closed his eyes and pulled the trigger. The doll was neatly decapitated.

Then, bowing toward his dear one, his delightful, execrable wife, his inevitable pitiless muse, and kissing her hand respectfully, he added, "Ah! my dear angel, how I thank you for my skill!"

VERLAINE'S "FORGOTTEN AIRS"

No. I

"The wind in the plain
Suspends its breath." — FAVART.

'T is ecstasy languishing,
Amorous fatigue,
Of woods all the shudderings

Embraced by the breeze,
'T is the choir of small voices
Toward the gray trees.

Oh, the frail and fresh murmuring!
The twitter and buzz,
The soft cry resembling
That 's expired by the grass ....
Oh, the roll of the pebbles
'Neath waters that pass!

Oh, this soul that is groaning
In sleepy complaint!
In us is it moaning?
In me and in you?
Low anthem exhaling
While soft falls the dew.

VERLAINE'S "FORGOTTEN AIRS"

No. VIII

In the unending
Dullness of this land,
Uncertain the snow
Is gleaming like sand.

No kind of brightness
In copper-hued sky,
The moon you might see
Now live and now die.

Gray float the oak trees —
Cloudlike they seem —
Of neighboring forests,
The mists in between.

Wolves hungry and lean,
And famishing crow,
What happens to you
When acid winds blow?

In the unending
Dullness of this land,
Uncertain the snow
Is gleaming like sand.

SONG BY MAETERLINCK

When he went away,
(Then I heard the door)
When he went away,
On her lips a smile there lay ....

Back he came to her,
(Then I heard the lamp)
Back he came to her,
Someone else was there ....

It was death I met,
(And I heard her soul)
It was death I met,
For her he 's waiting yet ....

Someone came to say,
(Child, I am afraid)
Someone came to say
That he would go away ....

With my lamp alight,
(Child, I am afraid)
With my lamp alight,
Approached I in affright ....

To one door I came,
(Child, I am afraid)
To one door I came,
A shudder shook the flame ....

At the second door,
(Child, I am afraid)
At the second door
Forth words of flame did pour ....

To the third I came,
(Child, I am afraid)
To the third I came,
Then died the little flame ...

Should he one day return
Then what shall we say?
Waiting, tell him, one
And dying for him lay ....

If he asks for you,
Say what answer then?
Give him my gold ring
And answer not a thing....

Should he question me
Concerning the last hour?
Say I smiled for fear
That he should shed a tear....

Should he question more
Without knowing me?
Like a sister speak;
Suffering he may be....

Should he question why
Empty is the hall?
Show the gaping door,
The lamp alight no more....

WHAT IS RELIGION?

WHAT IS RELIGION?

AND WHAT IS ITS ESSENCE?

(*February*, 1902)

CHAPTER I

ALWAYS in all human societies, at a certain period of their existence a time comes when their religion begins to diverge from its fundamental meaning, then diverges more and more, loses this fundamental meaning, and finally crystallizes into permanently established forms; — when its influence upon the life of men grows weaker and weaker.

At such periods, the educated minority, though no longer believing in the existing religious teaching, still pretend to believe, finding this religion necessary for holding the masses in the established order of life; whilst the masses, although adhering by the force of inertia to the established religion, are no longer guided in their lives by religious demands, but only by popular customs and state laws.

So it has been, many times, in many human communities. But what is now taking place in our Christian Society has never before occurred. It has never occurred before that the ruling and more educated minority, which has the chief influence on the masses, not only disbelieved in the existing religion, but was certain that in its time religion was no longer necessary at all, and that it taught those who doubted the truth of the accepted faith not some other, more rational and comprehensible religion than that existing, but even

persuaded them that religion in general had outlived its time, and had become not only a useless but even a harmful organ of social life, something like the appendix of the cæcum in the human organism.

Religion is studied by this class of men not as something which we know through our inner experience, but as an external phenomenon, a disease as it were to which some people are subject, and which we can understand only in its external symptoms.

Religion, according to some of these men, has sprung from the spiritualization of all the phenomena of nature (animism). According to others, from the idea of the possibility of communicating with departed ancestors. According to others again, from the fear of the powers of nature. And as science has proved — the scientists of our day further argue — that trees and stone cannot be animated, and deceased ancestors are no longer conscious of what the living do, and the phenomena of nature are explicable by natural causes, — therefore the necessity for religion and for all those restraints which people impose upon themselves as the result of religious beliefs has disappeared. In the opinion of scientists there once existed a period of unenlightenment — the religious period. This was outlived by mankind long ago, but occasional atavistic symptoms remain. Then there came the metaphysical period, which also has been outlived. And now, we, the enlightened generations, live in the scientific period, — of positive science, — which replaces religion and leads mankind to a lofty degree of development which it could never have attained whilst it submitted to superstitious religious teaching.

At the beginning of 1901 the celebrated French scientist Berthelot uttered a speech (*Revue de Paris*, January, 1901), in which he communicated to his audience the idea that the age of religion had passed, and that it must now be replaced by science. I cite this speech because it is the first to my hand and because it was uttered in the capital of the cultured world by a universally recognized scientist. But the same idea has been

expressed continually and everywhere from philosophical treatises down to newspaper articles.

Mons. Berthelot says in this speech that there were formerly two principles which moved mankind, Force and Religion. These motive powers have become unnecessary now, because their place has been taken by science. By science Mons. Berthelot evidently implies (as all men who believe in it do) a science which embraces the whole sphere of human knowledge, each branch classified according to the degree of its importance, and the whole harmoniously bound together. A science possessing such methods that all the data it discovers present one unquestionable truth. But such a science does not exist, as a matter of fact. What is called science to-day consists of a haphazard heap of information, united by nothing, often utterly unnecessary, and not only failing to present one unquestionable truth, but as often as not containing the grossest errors to-day put forward as truths, and to-morrow overthrown. It is evident, therefore, that the very thing which in Mons. Berthelot's opinion is to replace religion, does not exist. And therefore the assertion of Mons. Berthelot and those who agree with him, that science will replace religion, is entirely arbitrary, and is founded upon an unjustifiable belief in an Infallible Science, exactly resembling the belief in an Infallible Church.

And yet people who call themselves and are regarded as scientists are quite certain that already there exists a science which must and can replace religion, and even has replaced it.

"Religion has outlived its day; to believe in anything except science is ignorance. Science will arrange all that is necessary, and one should be guided in life by science alone." So think and say both the scientists themselves and the crowd, which, although very far from being scientific, yet believes the scientists and together with them asserts that religion is an outlived superstition and that our life should be guided only by science, — that is, in reality, by nothing, because science, according to its own acknowledged definition as

the investigation of everything that exists, cannot furnish any guidance for man's life.

CHAPTER II

The scientists of our times have decided that religion is unnecessary and that science will replace or already has replaced it; and yet, now as before, no human society or rational man ever has lived or can live without religion. (I say "rational" man, because an irrational man can live as an animal, without religion.) A rational man cannot live without religion, because religion alone gives the rational man the necessary guidance as to what he should do, and what he should do first and what next. A rational man cannot live without religion precisely because reason is an element of his nature. Every animal is guided in its actions — except those to which it is attracted by the direct demands of its desires — by consideration about the immediate results of its actions. Having considered these results by the aid of those means of comprehension which it possesses, the animal conforms its actions to the results, and always acts under the influence of these considerations in one and the same way, without wavering. Thus, for instance, a bee flies in search of honey and brings it home into its hive because in winter it will require the food it has collected for itself and the young; and beyond these considerations it knows nothing and is unable to know anything. A bird acts in the same way when it makes its nest, or migrates from the north to the south and *vice versa*. And so also does every animal when it commits any act, not from a direct immediate necessity, but under the influence of considerations about expected results.

But it is not so with man. The difference between a man and an animal consists in this, that the perceptive faculties in the animal are limited by what we call instinct, whereas reason is the essential perceptive faculty of man.

A bee collecting its food can have no doubts about

the rightness or wrongness of what it is doing. But a man gathering in the harvest cannot but reflect whether he is destroying for the future the growth of the wheat or fruit, and whether by thus gathering he is not depriving his neighbor of his food. He also cannot but think of the future of the children whom he feeds; and of many other things. The most important questions of conduct in life cannot be solved definitely by a rational man, precisely because of the multitude of results which he cannot help seeing. Every rational man feels, if he does not know, that in the most important affairs of life he cannot be guided either by the impulse of personal feelings or by considerations of the immediate results of his activity, because he sees too many different results, and often contradictory ones; results, that is, which with equal probability can be either beneficent or harmful, both to himself and to others.

There is a legend about an angel who descended to earth into a God-fearing family and killed a child in its cradle; when asked why he had done this, he replied that the child would have become a great malefactor and would have brought misery to its family.

But not only in the question, Which human life is useful, useless, or harmful? — not one of the most important questions of life can be solved, for a rational man, by considerations about immediate relations and results. A rational man cannot be content with the considerations which direct the actions of animals. Man may regard himself as an animal amongst animals, living from day to day; he may regard himself as a member of a family or of a society or of a nation living from century to century; he may, and even necessarily must (because his reason irresistibly attracts him to this), regard himself as a part of the whole Infinite Universe existing infinitely. And therefore a rational man is obliged to and always does do, in relation to the infinitely small circumstances of life which influence his actions, what in mathematics is called integration, that is, besides his relations to his immediate circumstances,

he must establish his relation to the whole universe, infinite in time and space, and conceived as a whole. And such an establishment by man of his relation to that whole of which he feels himself a part and from which he obtains guidance for his actions, is precisely what was and is called Religion. And therefore religion always has been and cannot cease to be an indispensable and permanent condition of the life of a rational man and of rational humanity.

CHAPTER III

And it was in this way that the men who were not bereft of the capacity of the higher (that is, the religious) consciousness, which distinguishes man from the animal, always understood religion. The oldest and most common definition of religion, from which the word itself is derived (*religio — religare*, to bind back), is that religion is a connection between man and God. "*Les obligations de l'homme envers Dieu, voilà la religion*" ("Man's obligations toward God; that is religion"), says Vovenargue. A similar meaning is attached to religion by Schleiermacher and Fehrbach, who recognize as the foundation of religion man's consciousness of his dependence on God. "*La religion est une affaire entre chaque homme et Dieu.*"— Beile. ("Religion is a matter between every man and God.") "*La religion est le résultat des besoins de l'âme et des effects de l'intelligence.*" — B. Constant. ("Religion is the result of the needs of the soul and the effects of the reason.") "*Religion is a certain method by which man realizes his relation to the superhuman and mysterious powers from whom he regards himself dependent.*" — Goblet d'Alviella. "*Religion is the definition of man's life by the connection of the human with that mysterious spirit, the power of which over the universe and himself he recognizes and with which he feels himself united.*" — A. Reville.

So that the essence of religion was always and is still understood by men who are not bereft of the highest

human capacity, as the establishment by man of his relation to the Infinite Being or Beings whose power he feels over himself. And however different this relation has been for different peoples at different times, it has always determined for man his destination in the world, from which naturally followed the guidance of his actions also. A Jew understood his relation to the Infinite as that of a member of a people chosen by God in preference to all other peoples, and who must therefore keep the Covenant concluded between God and this people. A Greek understood his relation as that of a being dependent upon the representatives of infinity, the gods, and who must therefore do what was pleasing to the gods. A Brahman understood his relation to the Infinite Brahma by considering himself a manifestation of this Brahma, and that it was his duty to strive to unite with this highest being, by the renunciation of life. A Buddhist understood and understands his relation to the Infinite as that of one who, passing from one form of life into another, inevitably suffers, and that as these sufferings proceed from passions and desires, therefore one should strive to destroy all passions and desires and so pass into Nirvana.

Every religion is an establishment by man of his relation to the Infinite Existence of which he feels himself a part, and from which relation he obtains the guidance for his conduct. And therefore any religion which does not establish the relation of man to the Infinite, as, for instance, Idolatry, or Magic, is not a religion, but only a corruption. And if a religion, although establishing a relation of man to God yet establishes it by assertions which disagree with reason and the modern knowledge of man so that man cannot believe such assertions, then this also is not religion, but an imitation. If a religion does not connect the life of man with the Infinite Existence, this also is not religion; and demands of faith in propositions from which no definite direction of man's actions follows, are also not religion.

True religion is the establishment by man of such a relation to the Infinite Life around him, as, while connect-

ing his life with this Infinitude and directing his conduct, is also in agreement with his reason and with human knowledge.

CHAPTER IV

The modern scientists, notwithstanding that never and at no time have people lived, nor do they now live, without religion, say, like Molière's involuntary doctor who asserted that the liver is on the left side: "'We have changed all that,' and one can and should live without religion." But religion remains as it always was, the chief motive power, the heart of the life of human societies, and without it, as without the heart, there can be no rational life. There have been, and there are, many different religions, because the expression of the relation of man to the Infinite, to God, or the gods, is different at different times, according to the different degrees of development of different nations; but no society of men since men have become rational beings could ever live and therefore never did live and cannot live without religion.

It is true that there have been (and still occur) periods in the life of nations when the existing religion was so distorted and so far behind life that it no longer guided man. But this cessation of the influence of religion, which has occurred at certain moments with every religion, has been only temporary. Religion, like everything vital, has the capacity of being born, developing, growing old, and dying, of reviving again, and reviving always in a more perfect form than before. After the period of the highest development of religion there always follows a period of weakness and lifelessness, after which again there generally follows a period of regeneration and of the establishment of a religious teaching more clear and rational than before. Such periods of development, decline, and regeneration have occurred in all religions: in the profound Brahman religion, in which the moment it began to grow old and to crystallize in coarse, permanently established forms de-

viated from its fundamental conception, there appeared on the one hand the revival of Brahmanism itself, and on the other the lofty teaching of Buddhism, which advanced mankind's understanding of its relation to the Infinite. A similar decline occurred in the Greek and Roman religion, and here also, after the decline had reached its lowest point, Christianity appeared. The same occurred with Church Christianity, which degenerated in Byzantium into idolatry and polytheism, at which time, as a counterbalance to this perverted Christianity, there appeared on the one side Paulicianism, and on the other, in opposition to the teaching of Trinity and Maryolatry, the severe Mohammedanism, with its fundamental dogma of One God. The same thing happened also with the Papal Medieval Christianity, which called forth the Reformation. So that periods of the decline of religious influence upon the majority of men present a necessary condition of the life and development of all religious teachings. This proceeds from the fact that every religious teaching in its true meaning, however crude it may be, always establishes the relation of man to the Infinite, identical for all men. Every religion recognizes man as equally insignificant in relation to Infinity; — and therefore every religion always contains the idea of the equality of all men before that which it regards as God, whether that be lightning, the wind, a tree, an animal, a hero, a deceased or even a live king, as it was in Rome. So that the recognition of the equality of men is necessarily an essential feature of every religion. But since in reality never and nowhere has there existed, nor now exists, an equality between men, therefore the moment a new religion appeared, which always included the recognition of the equality of men, then immediately those to whom inequality was advantageous endeavored to conceal this essential feature, and distorted the teaching itself. And this was what occurred always and everywhere, when a new religion appeared.

And this occurred, in the majority of cases, not consciously, but merely because men to whom inequality

was advantageous (those in power, and the wealthy), in order to feel themselves in the right in the face of the accepted teaching without altering their position, tried by every means to attribute to the new religious teaching a meaning which would allow inequality to be possible. And this distortion of the teaching, which allowed those in power over others to consider themselves in the right, being naturally transmitted to the masses, convinced them also that their submission to those in power was a demand of the religion they professed.

CHAPTER V

Every human activity is called forth by three influences: Feeling, Reason, and Suggestion (the suggestion which medical men call Hypnotism). Sometimes man acts only under the influence of feeling, and strives to attain his desires. Sometimes he acts under the influence of reason alone, which indicates to him his duties. Sometimes, and most often, man acts because he himself or other men have suggested to him a certain activity and he unconsciously submits to the suggestion. In normal conditions of life all three influences participate in man's activity. Feeling draws man toward a certain activity; reason verifies the agreement of this activity with the surrounding conditions, with the past, and with the anticipated future; and suggestion compels man to fulfil, without feeling, or thinking, the act elicited by feeling and approved by reason. If there were no feeling, man would undertake nothing; if there were no reason, man would simultaneously yield himself to many contradictory feelings, harmful to himself and others; if there were no capacity of submitting to one's own or other people's suggestion, man would have to experience that feeling which prompted him to a certain action, unceasingly, and continually to exert his reason in testing the expediency of his reason. And therefore all these three influences are indispensable to every human activity, however simple. If a man is moving

in a certain direction it is because his feeling has prompted him to move from one place to another, his reason has approved of this intention, has indicated the means to realize it (in the given case, walking along a certain road), and the muscles of his body obey. And the man advances in the desired direction. While he is advancing, his feeling and reason become free for another activity, which could not occur if the capacity of submitting to suggestion did not exist. So it is with all human activities, and so also with the most important of all — the religious activity. Feeling calls forth the necessity of establishing the relation of man to God; reason defines this relation; and suggestion prompts man to the activity which follows from this relation. But it takes place thus only while religion has not yet suffered distortion. As soon, however, as this distortion commences, suggestion becomes stronger and stronger, and the activities of feeling and reason weaker and weaker. As to the methods of suggestion, they are everywhere and always the same. They consist in profiting by those conditions of man when he is most susceptible to suggestion (childhood, and during important events in life — deaths, births, marriages), to influence him by works of art: architecture, sculpture, painting, music, dramatic performances, — and in this state of susceptibility, similar to that attained over separate individuals by hypnotic sleep, to incite him to that which is desired by the inciters.

This phenomenon is observable in all the old religious teachings: in the lofty teaching of Brahmanism, degenerated into a gross worship of innumerable images in various temples with singing and incense burning; and in the ancient Hebrew religion as preached by the prophets, transformed into the worship of Jehovah in an imposing temple with solemn hymns and processions; in transcendental Buddhism, degenerated, with its monasteries and images of Buddha, with its innumerable stately rites, into Occult Lamaism; and in Taoism, with its magic and exorcism.

Always, and in all religious teachings, when they begin

to be distorted, their guardians, having brought men into a state of weakened mental activity, use all their efforts to instil into them what they think necessary. And in all religions it was necessary to instil the same three doctrines which serve as the foundation for all the distortions to which all degenerating religions are submitted. Firstly, that a certain class of men exist who alone can be the mediators between men and God or gods; secondly, that miracles have occurred or are occurring which prove and corroborate the truth of that which is asserted by the mediators between men and God; and thirdly, that there are certain words, repeated verbally or written in books, which express the unchangeable will of God or gods, and therefore are sacred and infallible. And as soon as these doctrines are accepted under hypnotic influence, then all which is asserted by the mediators between God and men is accepted as sacred truth, and the chief aim of the distortion of religion is attained; — not only the concealment of the law of human equality, but also the establishment and confirmation of the greatest inequality, the division of men into castes, into men and Yogi, into Orthodox and heretics, saints and sinners. This has taken place and is taking place with Christianity: complete inequality has been recognized, and men are divided not only in the understanding of the teaching, into clergy and laity, but also in relation to social position, into those who have power and those who must submit to power; and this is recognized as established by God Himself according to the teaching of Paul.

CHAPTER VI

The inequality of men, not only as clergy and laity, but also as rich and poor, master and slaves, has been established by the Christian Church-Religion in as definite and rigid a form as in other religions. And yet to judge by the data we have concerning the primitive condition of Christianity, and by the teaching expressed

in the Gospels, it would seem that the chief methods of distortion used in other religions had been foreseen, and a distinct warning against them uttered. Against a caste of priests it was distinctly said that no one can be another's teacher ("Be not ye called Rabbi. . . . And call no man your father. . . . Neither be ye called masters"); against attributing a sacred meaning to books it was said that it is the spirit which is important and not the letter, and that men should not believe human traditions, and that all the law and the prophets, that is, all the books regarded as Holy Writ, are summed up in this saying, that one should act toward one's neighbors as one would wish them to act toward oneself. If nothing is said against the miracles, and if in the Gospel itself miracles are described as if performed by Jesus, nevertheless from the whole spirit of the teaching it is evident that Jesus bases the truth of his teaching not on miracles but on its own merits.

("If any man willeth to do his will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself.") But above all, the equality of men has been proclaimed by Christianity no longer as a deduction from man's relation to the Infinite, but as the fundamental teaching of the brotherhood of men, all men having been recognized as sons of God.

It would seem, therefore, to have been impossible to so distort Christianity as to destroy the consciousness of the equality of all men. But the human mind is ingenious, and it invented, perhaps unconsciously, or half consciously, a new method or *truc*,[1] as the French say, to render the Gospel warnings and the clear declaration of the equality of men ineffectual. This "dodge" consisted in attributing infallibility not only to certain words but also to a certain body of men called The Church, which has the right to transmit this infallibility to other men elected by it. A little addition to the Gospel was also invented, — that Christ when leaving for heaven transmitted to certain men the exclusive right not only of teaching others the divine truth (according to the

[1] Trick, cunning, dodge. — Tr.

letter of the Gospel, he transmitted also at the same time the power, not generally used, of being invulnerable to serpents, poisons, and fire), but also of making men saved or unsaved, and, above all, of transmitting this right to other men. And as soon as the idea of the Church was firmly established, then all the Gospel warnings for preventing the distortion of the religion became ineffectual. Reason was termed the source of error, and the Gospel was interpreted not as common sense demands, but as those who composed the Church desired.

And therefore all the three previous methods of distorting religions — Priesthood, Miracles, and the Infallibility of Writings — were also admitted into Christianity in their fullest power. The lawfulness of the existence of mediators between God and men was recognized, because the necessity and lawfulness of mediators was recognized by the Church; the reality of miracles was recognized because the Infallible Church witnessed to them; the Bible was recognized as sacred because the Church so recognized it.

And Christianity was distorted just as all the other religions were, but with this difference: that precisely because Christianity proclaimed with especial clearness its fundamental doctrine of the equality of men as the sons of God, it was necessary to distort the whole teaching with especial force in order to conceal this fundamental doctrine. And by the help of the idea of the Church, this was accomplished to an extent greater than in any other religion.

And as a result no religion ever proclaimed statements so obviously out of agreement with reason and contemporary human knowledge. Not to mention the absurdities of the Old Testament, such as the creation of light before the sun, the creation of the world six thousand years ago, the housing of all the species of animals in the ark, and various immoral abominations such as the direction to murder children and whole populations at the command of God; not to mention also that absurd sacrament, about which Vol-

taire even used to say that though many different religions had existed and still existed, never before had there been one the principal religious act of which consisted of eating one's God — to pass these things by, what can be more senseless than the assertions that the mother of God was both a mother and a virgin — that the sky opened and a voice was heard issuing from it — that Jesus flew away into the skies and is now sitting somewhere there on the right hand of the Father — or that God is One and Three, and not three Gods like Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva, but One, and at the same time Three? And what can be more immoral than that awful theology according to which God is cruel and revengeful, punishes all men for the sin of Adam, and to save them sends His Son to the earth knowing beforehand that men will kill him and will be cursed for doing so; and that the salvation of men from sin consists in being christened, or in believing that all this is actually true, that the Son of God was killed by men for the salvation of men, and that those who do not believe this will be punished by God with eternal torments? So that leaving aside the additions, as some regard them, to the chief dogmas of this religion, such as the beliefs in the various relics and *ikons*, of the Virgin Mary, of petitionary prayers directed to various saints according to their specialities, — leaving aside also the Protestant doctrine of predestination, — the foundations of this religion, established by the Nicene Creed, and recognized by every one, are so absurd and immoral, and are developed to such a degree of contradiction to normal human feeling and reason, that men cannot believe them. Men may with their lips repeat certain words, but they cannot believe that which has no sense. One may say with one's lips: "I believe that the world was created six thousand years ago;" or, "I believe that Jesus flew away into the skies and is sitting on the right hand of the Father;" or, "God is One, and also Three;" — but no one can believe it, because the words have no sense. And therefore the men of our modern world who profess distorted Christianity, in reality believe in nothing.

And it is in this that the peculiarity of our time consists.

CHAPTER VII

In our time men believe in nothing, and yet, owing to the false definition of faith which they have drawn from the Epistle to the Hebrews, incorrectly attributed to Paul, they imagine that they have a faith. Faith, according to this definition, is ὑπόστασις (the realization) of things hoped for, and ἔλενχος (the certainty) of things not seen. But besides the impossibility of faith being the realization of things hoped for, faith being a mental state, and the realization of things hoped for an external event, — faith also is not the certainty of things unseen, for this certainty, as stated in the comment farther on, is founded on confidence in the witness of the truth, and confidence and faith are two different conceptions.

Faith is not hope, and not confidence, but a separate mental state. Faith is man's consciousness of a certain position in the world which imposes on him the obligation to fulfil certain actions. A man acts according to his faith, not, as it is said in the Catechism, because he believes in the Unseen as much as in the seen; and not because he hopes to receive his expectation; but only because having defined his position in the Universe he naturally acts in conformity with this position. So that an agriculturist cultivates the land, and a sailor undertakes a voyage, not because, as it is stated in the Catechism, they both believe in the Unseen, or hope to receive a reward for their action (this hope does exist, but it is not by it that they are directed), but because they regard this activity as their calling. So also the religious believer acts in a certain way, not because he believes in the Unseen, or expects a reward for his activity, but because, having understood his position in the Universe, he naturally acts in accordance with this position. If a man has defined his position in society as that of an unskilled or skilled laborer, or a government official, or a merchant, he regards it as necessary to

work, and as an unskilled or skilled laborer, an official, or a merchant, he does his work. So also in general a man who defines his position in the Universe in one way or another, inevitably and naturally acts in accordance with this definition (sometimes even not a definition but only a vague consciousness). Thus, for example, a man who has defined his position as that of a member of a people chosen by God, who, in order to profit by God's protection, must obey the commands of this God, will so live as to obey these commands; and a second man who has defined his position as that of one who has passed and is passing through various forms of existence and from whose actions depend whether his future will be better or worse, will also be guided in life by this definition of his; and the conduct of a third man, who has defined his position as that of an accidental combination of atoms in which consciousness has become kindled for a time, but which will eventually perish forever, — will differ from the two former men.

The conduct of these men will be quite different because they have defined their position differently; that is, they have a different faith. Faith is the same as religion, only with this difference, that by the word *religion* we imply a certain phenomenon externally observed, whereas by *faith* we mean the same thing experienced by man within himself. Faith is man's conception of his relation to the Infinite Universe,[1] and the direction of his activity resulting from that conception. And therefore true faith is never irrational, or in disagreement with existing knowledge, and its feature cannot be supernaturalism and senselessness, as is supposed and has been expressed by a Father of the Church, who said, "*Credo quia absurdum.*" On the contrary, the assertions of true faith, although they cannot be proved, not only never contain anything contrary to the reason and the knowledge of man, but always explain that which in life without these conceptions of true faith appears irrational and contradictory.

[1] The Russian word, translated here as "Infinite Universe," embraces the whole spiritual and material existence. — *Trans.*

Thus, for instance, the ancient Hebrew who believed in the existence of a Supreme, Eternal, Almighty Being, who created the Universe, the Earth, the Animals, Man, and so forth, and promised protection to His people if this people obeyed His law, — this man believed in nothing irrational or opposed to his knowledge, but on the contrary his faith explained to him many things in life which otherwise were inexplicable.

So also the Hindoo who believes that our souls have been in animals and that according to our good or bad life they will pass into higher or lower animals, explains to himself by this belief much which without it is incomprehensible.

So too with a man who regards life as an evil and the object of life as the attainment of peace by the annihilation of desires. He believes not in something irrational, but on the contrary in that which renders his life-conception more rational than it was without this belief.

So too with a true Christian, who believes that God is the spiritual father of all men and that man's highest welfare is attained when he recognizes his sonship to God and the brotherhood of all men.

All these beliefs, even though they may not be provable, are not irrational in themselves, but on the contrary supply a more rational meaning to the phenomena of life, which appear irrational and contradictory without them. And besides this all these beliefs defining the position of man in the universe necessarily demand certain actions corresponding to this position. And therefore if a religious teaching establishes senseless ideas which explain nothing, but only still more confuse the understanding of life, then this is not faith but a distortion of faith, which has already lost the features of true faith and which lays no obligations on men but rather becomes their tool.

One of the chief distinctions between true faith and its corruption, is that when it is corrupted man demands of God that in return for his sacrifices and prayers God should fulfil his desires, should be the servant of man. Whereas according to true faith man feels that God

demands of him, a man, the fulfilment of *His* will, demands that man should serve Him.

And it is just this faith which is not only lacking in the men of our times, — they even do not know what it is, and imply by faith either the repetition with the lips of whatever is taught them as the essence of faith, or else the fulfilment of rites which according to the teaching of Church-Christianity contribute to their obtaining what they desire.

CHAPTER VIII

Men to-day are without faith. One set, the educated well-to-do minority, have freed themselves from the influence of the Church and believe in nothing, regarding all faiths either as absurdities or as useful tools for keeping the masses under their power. Whereas the great destitute uneducated majority who with some few exceptions do indeed believe, being under hypnotic influence, imagine that what is suggested to them as faith is faith, but in reality it is not faith, as it not only fails to explain to man his position in the Universe but still more confuses him.

From this situation and from the mutual relation between the unbelieving and simulating minority and the hypnotized majority, is composed the life of our so-called Christian world.

And this life, both of the minority which holds in its hands the means of hypnotism, as well as of the majority which is hypnotized, is terrible, both because of the cruelty and immorality of the rulers and of the crushed and stupefied state of the great working masses. Never at any period of religious decline did the indifference to and forgetfulness of the principal feature of all religions, and especially of the Christian one, — the equality of man, — attain the degree it has reached in our day.

Besides the complete absence of religion, the main reason of the awful modern cruelty of man to man is also due to that refined complexity of life which con-

ceals from men the effects of their actions. However cruel Attilas and Khenghiz Khans and their men may have been when they themselves killed face to face with their victims, the process of killing must have been much more unpleasant to them, and still more so the consequences of the killing, the cries of the relatives, the sight of the corpses; so that the consequences of their cruelty moderated it. But in our time we kill men through the medium of so complicated a transferring apparatus, and the consequences of our cruelty are so carefully removed and concealed from us, that there are no influences to moderate the cruelty, and the cruelty of one group of men toward others keeps increasing and increasing, and has at the present time attained limits which it never before reached.

If in our day any man — I do not say a Nero, a recognized villain, but any ordinary man — should wish to construct a pond of human blood for the purpose of enabling sick wealthy people under the advice of scientific medical men to bathe in, I think he would be able to arrange it without hindrance so long as he did so in the ordinary respectable way; that is, did not by force compel people to shed their blood, but placed them in a position where they could not live without shedding it; and, besides, if he invited the clergy, who would consecrate the new pond, just as they consecrate cannons, rifles, prisons, gallows, and men of science, who would invent the proofs of the necessity and lawfulness of such an institution, just as they have discovered the proofs of the necessity of wars and houses of ill-fame.

The essential principle of all religions, the equality of man, has been forgotten to such an extent, abandoned, and obstructed by various absurd dogmas, in the religion professed; whilst in science inequality in the form of the struggle of existence and the survival of the fittest has also been so completely recognized as the necessary phenomenon of life — that the destruction of millions of human lives for the convenience of those in power is regarded as a most ordinary and necessary phenomenon of life, and is continually being produced.

Men of our day cannot sufficiently plume themselves on those brilliant, unprecedented, colossal successes which have been won in the technical sphere during the nineteenth century.

There is no doubt that there has never been in history so great a material success — so great a control over the forces of nature — as that which has been attained in the nineteenth century. But there is also no doubt that never in history has there been such an example of immoral life, free from any forces that control the animal propensities of man, — as that lived by our Christian humanity, which is becoming more and more bestial.

The material success attained by the men of the nineteenth century is indeed great, but this success has been and is bought by an indifference to the most elementary demands of morality to which humanity has never before attained, even in the times of Khenghiz Khan, Attila, or Nero.

There is no dispute that ironclads, railways, book-printing, tunnels, photographs, Röntgen rays, and so forth, are all very fine. They are all very fine, but human lives are also fine, incomparably fine, as Ruskin used to say, those human lives which are pitilessly ruined by the million to purchase ironclads, railroads, tunnels, which not only do not adorn but disfigure life. To this it is generally replied that appliances are already being invented, and in the future will be invented still more, by means of which human lives will not be ruined as they are now; — but this is not true. If men do not regard themselves as all brothers, and human life is not considered the most sacred object, which not only cannot be violated, but the maintenance of which should be regarded as man's first and most urgent duty, — that is, if men do not regard each other religiously, they will always for their own personal advantages ruin each other's lives. Not even a fool will consent to spend thousands when he can attain the same end by spending a hundred, with the addition of a few human lives which are in his power. In

Chicago approximately the same number of men are killed by the railways every year. And the owners of the railways quite naturally do not adopt those appliances which would reduce the number, calculating that the annual payment to the injured or their families is less than the interest on the cost of the appliances.

It may well be that those who ruin human lives for their own advantages will be shamed by public opinion and compelled to adopt the necessary appliances; but if men are not religious and do their deeds to please men and not to please God, then, having adopted appliances to save human lives in one place, they will profit in some other way by human lives, as the most advantageous material for increasing their wealth.

It is easy to conquer nature, to construct railways, steamboats, museums, and so forth, if one is not sparing of human lives. The Egyptian kings were proud of their pyramids, and we admire them enthusiastically, forgetting those millions of lives of slaves which were destroyed during their construction. And so we admire also palaces, as we see them in exhibitions, our ironclads, our transoceanic cables, — forgetting what we pay for all this. We might be proud of these things if it were all done voluntarily by free men, and not by slaves.

The Christian nations have conquered and subdued the American Indians, Hindoos, Africans, are now conquering and subduing the Chinese, and they are proud of this. But these conquests and subjugations occur not because Christian nations are spiritually superior to those conquered, but on the contrary because spiritually they are incomparably inferior. Leaving Hindoos and Chinese aside, even the Zulus had and have obligatory religious rules of some kind which imposed certain actions and forbade others; whereas our Christian nations have none. Rome conquered the whole world just when it had become free from every religion. This, only in a still stronger degree, is now also taking place with the Christian nations. They are all in the same condition of the absence of

religion, and therefore, notwithstanding their inner dissensions, they are all united as one federated band of robbers in which theft, loot, depravity, murder of individuals and masses are accomplished not only without the least tremor of conscience but with the greatest self-satisfaction, as in China the other day. Some believe in nothing, and are proud of it; others simulate belief in that which for their own advantage they instil into the people under the pretense of faith; others again — the great majority, the whole of the people — accept as faith that hypnotic suggestion to which they are subjected, and servilely submit to everything demanded of them by the ruling suggestors who themselves believe in nothing.

And these suggestors demand what was demanded by all the Neros who tried to fill up in some way their empty lives — the satisfaction of their insane luxury spreading out in all directions. And luxury is attained by naught else than the enslavery of man; the moment there is slavery luxury augments; the increase of luxury inevitably drags with it the increase of slavery, because only hungry, cold, want-driven people will all their lives do what is unnecessary for themselves but necessary for the amusement of their rulers.

CHAPTER IX

In the sixth chapter of the Book of Genesis there is a passage of deep meaning, in which the author says that God, before the Flood, having seen that that Spirit of His which He gave to men for His service was only used by them for the service of their flesh, — was so angry with them that He regretted their creation, and before their entire destruction decided to shorten the life of men to a hundred and twenty years. It is just this which according to the Biblical narrative angered God and caused Him to shorten the life of man, which has now occurred with the men of our Christian world.

Reason is that power in men which defines their relation to the Universe; and as the relation of all men to the Universe is the same, the establishment of this relation, that is, religion, unites men. And the unity of men affords them the highest physical and spiritual welfare accessible to them.

Complete unity in the most perfect, lofty reason, and therefore complete welfare, is the ideal toward which humanity is striving; and every religion which answers the questions of the men of a given society both as to what is the Universe, and what they are in this Universe, unites men, and therefore brings them nearer to the realization of complete welfare. But when reason, abandoning its proper function of defining man's relation to God and his corresponding activities, is directed not only to the service of man's flesh, and not only to cruel strife with men and other beings, but also to the justification of their life, which is contrary both to the nature and the destiny of man, then occur those terrible calamities from which the majority of men are now suffering and those conditions which appear to preclude all possibility of a return to a rational and righteous life.

Heathens mutually united by the crudest religious teaching are much nearer the conception of the truth than the pseudo-Christian nations of our time, who live without religion, and amongst whom the foremost men are persuaded and teach to others that religion is not necessary, and that it is much better to live without any religion.

Amongst heathens there may be found men who, having become conscious of the contradictions between their faith and their increasing knowledge and the demands of their reason, will work out or assimilate a new religious teaching more in harmony with the new mental state of their nation, — a religion which will be accepted by their countrymen and fellow-believers. But the men of our world, some of whom regard religion as an instrument for subjugation, others as nonsense, and others again, — the great majority of the people, under the in-

fluence of a gross deceit, — believe they possess true religion, the men of our Christian world have become impenetrable to the influence of any progressive movement toward truth.

Proud of their improvements for the life of the body, and of their refined idle theories which not only justify their life, but also demonstrate their superiority to all nations of all past epochs, — they stagnate in their ignorance and immorality, in the full assurance that they stand on a height to which humanity had never before attained, and that each step on the road of ignorance and immorality lifts them up to a yet higher plane of enlightenment and progress.

CHAPTER X

It is natural to a man to establish conformity between his physical and his rational activities. A man can have no peace until he has established this conformity one way or another. But it can be established in two ways. One way is when a man is persuaded by his reason of the necessity or desirability of a certain action or actions, and then acts according to this decision. The other way is when a man acts under the influence of his feelings, and then invents a mental explanation or justification for his act.

The first method of conforming one's action with one's reason is natural to those who profess some kind of religion, and who know by its precepts what they should and what they should not do. The second method is natural chiefly to irreligious people, who do not possess any general principal for deciding the qualities of their actions, and who therefore always establish the harmony between reason and conduct, not by subordinating conduct to reason, but, after having acted under the influence of feeling, by using their reason to justify their action.

A religious man, knowing what is good or bad in his conduct, and that of other men, and why one thing is good and another bad, will, if he sees a contradiction

between the demand of his reason and his actions, or those of other men, use all the efforts of his reason to discover a way to destroy these contradictions; that is, to learn to harmonize his actions with the demands of his reason in the best way Whereas an irreligious man, having no guide to decide the merits of his actions other than the pleasure they afford him, surrendering to the impulse of his numerous and often antagonistic feelings, involuntarily falls into contradiction; and having so fallen endeavors to solve or conceal it by arguments more or less complicated and ingenious, but always untruthful. And therefore, while the reasoning of religious people is always simple, uncomplicated, and truthful, the mental activity of irreligious people becomes especially subtle, complicated, and untruthful.

I will take the commonest example. A man is addicted to depravity; that is, is unchaste, unfaithful to his wife, or else lives immorally being unmarried. If he is a religious man he knows this is wrong, and the whole force of his reason is directed toward finding a way to free himself from his vice: avoiding association with adulterers, increasing his labors, arranging a rigorous life, not allowing himself to look on women as objects of lust, and so forth. And this is all very simple and can be understood by every one. But if the depraved man is irreligious, he immediately invents all sorts of reasons why it is very good to love women. And here begin all kinds of most intricate, cunning, and refined considerations, about the affinity of souls, about beauty, about free love, etc., — which the more they are developed the more they obscure the question and conceal what is essential.

The same thing occurs with irreligious people in all spheres of action and thought. With the object of concealing their inherent contradictions, they accumulate all sorts of elaborate and specious arguments, which by filling their minds with unnecessary frivolities divert their attention from the important and essential, and give them the possibility of becoming hardened in that deceit in which the men of our world live without noticing it.

"Men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil," it is said in the Gospels. "For every one that doeth ill hateth the light, and cometh not to the light lest his works should be reproved."

And therefore the men of our civilized world, having organized the most cruel, animal, immoral life, owing to the absence of religion, have also brought their involved, elaborate, useless mental activities, concealing the evil of this life, to that degree of unnecessary complication and intricacy that the majority have entirely lost all capacity of recognizing the distinction between good and evil, falsehood and truth.

To the men of our civilized world not one question exists which they can approach directly and simply: every question, economical, civic, political, diplomatic, scientific, to say nothing of philosophic and religious questions, are presented so falsely and artificially, and are therefore enveloped in so dense a shroud of intricate, unnecessary arguments, of elaborate distortions of ideas and words, of sophisms and disputations, that all discussions of such questions move in circles, and, like wheels without a connecting strap, which propel nothing, lead to no results, except the one object for which they were produced: the concealment from oneself and others of the evil in which men live and which they commit.

CHAPTER XI

In all the spheres of the so-called science of to-day there is one feature which renders ineffective all the efforts directed to the investigation of the various departments of knowledge. This feature is that all the investigations of contemporary science avoid the essential problem to which an answer is required, and study secondary matters, the investigation of which leads to nothing and becomes the more confused the longer it is continued.

And indeed this cannot be otherwise with a science

which selects the objects of its investigations accidentally and not according to the demands of a religious conception of life, which would define what should be studied and why, what first and what after. Thus, for instance, in the at present fashionable sciences of sociology or political economy, one would think there could be but one question: What is the cause and purpose of some people doing nothing and others working for them? (If there is another question: Why people work separately, hindering each other, and not together, in common, which would be more advantageous?—this question is included in the other. If there were no inequality there would be no struggle.) One would imagine there was only this one question, but science does not even think of putting it and answering it, but instead it raises its own distant discussions and then leads them so that in no way can their deductions either solve or contribute to the solution of the fundamental question. Arguments are started about what was and is, and this past and present is considered as something as unalterable as the movements of the stars. Abstract theories are invented about values, capital, profit, interest,—and a complex mental play, a hundred years old, ensues between disputing men. Whereas in reality the question is solved very simple and easily.

The solution is in this: As all men are brothers and equal, each should act with others as he desires that others should act with him; and therefore the whole kernel of the matter lies in the destruction of the false religious law and the reëstablishment of the true law. But the leaders of our Christian world not only decline to accept this solution,—on the contrary they endeavor to conceal the possibility of such a solution, and for this purpose lend themselves to those idle theorizings which they call science.

The same thing occurs in the sphere of jurisprudence. One would imagine that the one essential question is, Why do people exist who allow themselves to exercise violence toward other men, to rob, imprison, execute them, send them to wars, and much else? The solution

is very simple if the question is considered from the only standpoint which is adequate — the religious standpoint. From the religious point of view man cannot and should not exercise violence toward his neighbor; and therefore to solve the question one thing is necessary: to destroy all the superstitions and sophisms which admit violence, and to instil into men the religious principles which clearly exclude the possibility of violence.

But the leaders not only refrain from this, but use all their mental subtlety to hide from men the possibility and necessity of this solution. They write a mountain of books about various rights — civil, criminal, police, ecclesiastical, financial, and so forth, and dilate and dispute on these themes, quite persuaded that they are doing not only a useful but a very important work. As to the question why amongst men who are in essence equal, some judge, coerce, plunder, and execute others, — to this they not only give no answer, they do not even recognize its existence. According to their doctrine it appears that these acts of violence are accomplished, not by men, but by some sort of abstraction called The State.

In the same way the scientists of our day avoid and pass by in silence all the essential questions and hide the inner contradictions in all spheres of knowledge.

In the sphere of historical knowledge there is only one question — How the workers, that is, 999 thousandths of all mankind, lived? To this question there is not even the semblance of an answer. The question does not even exist, but mountains of books are written by historians of one class about the stomach-aches of Louis XI., about the villainies of Elizabeth of England and Ivan the Terrible, and who were their ministers, and what verses and comedies were composed by the *litterateurs* for the amusement of these kings and their mistresses and ministers; while the historians of another class write about the importance of the land in which the peoples lived, what they ate, what they traded in, and what clothes they wore, — in general about everything which had no influence on the life of the people but was the result of their religion, which is regarded by

the historians of this category as itself the result of the food and clothing used by the people.

And yet the answer to the question, how the workers formerly lived, can be given only by recognizing religion as the necessary condition of the life of the people. And therefore the answer is to be found in the study of the religions professed by the nations, which placed them in their several positions.

In the sphere of natural sciences one would think there was no particular necessity for obscuring the common sense of people, but here also, owing to the trend of thought which the science of our day has taken, instead of the most natural answers to the question, What is the description of this world of human beings, plants, and animals, and how is it subdivided? — only idle, obscure, and utterly useless chatter is circulated, chiefly directed against the Biblical story of the creation of the world, and about how organisms originated, which is really of no use to any one, and besides cannot be ascertained, as this origin, however we explain it, will always be concealed from us in the infinitude of time and space. And on these themes theories, refutations, and supplementary theories have been invented which form the subject of millions of books, and the unexpected deduction from which is only one: That the law of life to which man must submit is the struggle for existence. More than this, practical sciences like technology and medicine, in consequence of the absence of a leading religious principle, involuntarily diverge from a rational end and take a false direction. Thus all technology is directed, not to the end of alleviating the labor of the people, but to improvements necessary only for the wealthy classes, and which tend to separate still further the rich from the poor, the masters from the slaves. And if certain advantages from these inventions and improvements, some crumbs, fall to the lot of the masses, this is not at all because they have been apportioned, but only because they are of such a character that they cannot be kept back.

And so with medical science, which has in its false

direction reached that stage where it is accessible only to the wealthy classes, whereas the masses, owing to their mode of life and their poverty, and to the neglect of the chief problems of the amelioration of the life of the poor, can only profit by it in such proportions and under such conditions that its help only demonstrates more clearly the deviation of medical science from its proper end.

But these deviations from, and the distortion of, the essential problems is most astounding in what is called Philosophy. One would think there is one problem which philosophy ought to solve: What am I to do? And if in the philosophies of Christian nations the answers to this question have been unnecessarily associated with the greatest confusion, yet there were answers, in the teaching of Spinoza, of Kant in his "Kritik of Practical Reason," of Schopenhauer, and especially of Rousseau. But in later days, since the time of Hegel, who recognized everything that is as rational, the question "What am I to do?" recedes into the background, and philosophy directs the whole of its attention to the investigation of that which is, and to conforming it to a previously prepared theory. This is the first step in the descent. The next step, which reduces human thought yet lower, is the recognition of "struggle for existence" as the fundamental law, merely because this struggle is observable in animals and plants. According to this theory it is claimed that the destruction of the weaker is a law which should not be opposed. Finally comes the third step, the mischievous attempts at originality of a half-mad Nietzsche, which do not even represent anything whole and connected, — the random jottings of immoral thoughts founded on nothing, — but which are recognized by advanced people as the last word of philosophical science; and in answer to the question "What am I to do?" one is told directly, "Live for your own pleasure without attending to the life of others."

If any one were to doubt that terrible stupefaction and bestiality which has been attained by modern Chris-

tian humanity, then, leaving out of account the latest crimes, the Boer and Chinese wars, which are defended by the clergy and recognized as heroic feats by all in power, — this one extraordinary success of Nietzsche's writings may serve as an irrefutable proof. The disconnected writings of an agile but unintelligent and abnormal German, possessed of the mania of grandeur, appear, aiming at effect in the most trivial way. Neither in their ability nor their truth have these writings any real claim to the attention of the public. Such writings, not only in the time of Kant, Leibnitz, Hume, but even fifty years ago, would not only have failed to attract attention but could not even have appeared; whilst in our time, all so-called educated humanity is enchanted with the ravings of Mons. Nietzsche, refutes and interprets him, and his works are published in every language in innumerable copies.

Turgenieff has humorously said that reversed platitudes are often employed by incapable men to draw attention to themselves. For instance, every one knows that water is wet, but suddenly a man with a serious mien says that water is dry, alluding to ice, and such a statement, expressed with assurance, attracts attention.

Thus, also, the whole world knows that virtue consists in the subjugation of one's passions — in self-sacrifice. This is recognized not by Christianity alone, with which Nietzsche imagines he is fighting, — it is the eternal higher law which humanity has reached in Brahmanism, Buddhism, Confucianism, in the ancient Persian religion. And suddenly a man appears who declares that he has become persuaded that self-sacrifice, meekness, humility, love, are all vices which ruin mankind (he has in view Christianity, forgetting all other religions). One can understand that such an assertion staggers people at first. But having reflected a little and failed to find in the work any proof of this strange assertion, every rational man must thrust aside such a book, and only feel astonishment that in our time there is no absurdity too great to find a publisher. But with Nietzsche's books this is not the case. The majority of men, pseudo-

enlightened, examine the theory of the "Ober-Mensche" seriously, and consider its author a great philosopher, a successor to Descartes, Leibnitz, Kant.

And all this happens for this reason, that for the majority of the pseudo-enlightened men of our day the allusion to virtue and its principal basis, self-sacrifice, love, which restrain and condemn their animal life, is abhorrent, and it is pleasant to them to meet a doctrine of cruelty asserting the justice of establishing one's own happiness and greatness on the lives of the others on whom we feed, even though expressed haphazardly, illogically, disconnectedly.

CHAPTER XII

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Scribes for having taken the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven, and neither entered themselves nor allowed others to enter.

This is what is now being done by the scientific Scribes of to-day: these men have taken the keys, not of the Kingdom of Heaven, but of enlightenment, and neither enter themselves nor admit others. The augurs — the Priesthood — by the means of every kind of deceit and hypnotism have persuaded men that Christianity is not a doctrine which preaches the equality of all men and so destroys the entire modern heathen organization of life, but on the contrary that it supports it, and dictates to men that they must distinguish some from others, as stars are distinguished; that they must recognize that all power is from God, and willingly submit to it; and in general persuades the oppressed that their position is from God, and that they must bear it in meekness and humility, and submit to those oppressors who not only may not be meek and humble themselves, but must, while correcting others, teach and punish, — like Emperors, Kings, Popes, Bishops, and every class of secular and spiritual rulers, — living meanwhile in a splendor and luxury which it is the duty of their inferiors to supply. It is, thanks to this false teaching,

which they support energetically, that those in power rule the people and force them to serve their idleness, luxury, and vices.

And the only men who are emancipated from the Church-hypnotism, and who alone might save the people from their oppression, and who say they do desire this, — the scientists, — instead of doing the things which might accomplish what they desire, do exactly the contrary, and imagine that they are thus serving the people.

One might think that the most superficial observation of that which above all preoccupies those who keep the people under their power would enable these men of science to understand what force moves and restrains nations in a certain position, and that they ought to direct all their attention to this force. But they not only fail to do this, — they regard it as utterly useless.

These men appear not to wish to see this, and they carefully, and often sincerely, do for the people the most varied things, but do not do that one thing which before all is necessary to the people. Their activity resembles that of a man who might endeavor to move a train by muscular efforts, — he need only mount the tender and do what he continually sees the engine driver do — turn the handle which admits the steam into the cylinder. This steam is the religious life-conception of men. And scientists need only observe with what jealousy all rulers reserve to themselves this motive force, through which they rule the nations, in order to understand to what their energies should be directed if they would liberate the people from their slavery.

What does the Turkish Sultan defend, and to what does he hold most closely? And why does the Russian Emperor, arriving at any town, go to kiss the local relics and *ikons* before he does anything else? And why, notwithstanding all the varnish of culture with which he covers himself, does the German Emperor, in all his speeches appropriately or inappropriately allude to God, to Christ, to the sanctity of religion and the oath, etc? Why, because they all know that their power is based

on the army, and the army, the possibility of the existence of the army, is based only on religion. And if the wealthy are especially pious and pretend to be believers, go to church and keep the Sabbath day, they do all this chiefly because their instinct of self-preservation tells them that their exceptionally advantageous position in society is connected with the religion they profess.

These people often do not know in what way their power is founded on the religious deceit, but through the instinct of self-preservation they know where their weak point lies, upon which their position is dependent, and they protect this point before everything else. These men will always permit, and have permitted within certain limits, socialistic and even revolutionary propaganda, but the religious foundations they will never allow to be touched.

And therefore if the leaders of to-day, the Scientists, Liberals, Socialists, Revolutionists, Anarchists, cannot understand from psychology or history what it is which moves nations, they might at least through this obvious experience become convinced that the motive power lies, not in material conditions, but only in religion.

But, strange to say, the scientists, the leaders of to-day, whilst very excellently analyzing and understanding the conditions of the life of the nations, do not see what so obviously strikes one in the face. If those who act so leave the people in religious ignorance intentionally, in order to retain their advantageous position in the minority, this is a terrible, an infamous deceit. Those who so act are those very Pharisees whom more than any one else, whom even alone amongst all men, Jesus condemned — condemned because no monsters or miscreants have introduced and are introducing so much evil into the life of mankind as they.

If, on the other hand, these men are sincere, then the only explanation of this strange blindness is that, as the masses are under the hypnotism of false religion, so also these pseudo-enlightened people of to-day are under the hypnotism of false science, which has decided that the chief nerve by which humanity has always lived

and is living, is no longer necessary, and may be replaced by something else.

CHAPTER XIII

It is in this error or deceit of the Scribes — of educated men of our world — that the especial feature of our period consists, and in this lies the cause of the calamitous state in which Christian humanity is living, and of that animalism into which it is sinking deeper and deeper.

Generally, the leading educated men of to-day assert that those false religious beliefs which are held by the masses are of no special importance, and that it is not worth while to, nor is there any need of, contesting them directly, as Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau, and others did. Science, in their opinion, that is, that disconnected casual information which they spread amongst the people, will attain this end by itself; that is, man, having learnt how many millions of miles the earth is from the sun, and what minerals the sun and stars contain, will cease to believe in ecclesiastical doctrines.

In this sincere or insincere assertion or assumption lies a great error or else a terrible piece of guile. From earliest childhood, the age most receptive of suggestion, at the very time when the educator cannot be too careful about what he transmits, senseless and immoral dogmas of so-called Christian religion, incompatible with reason or knowledge, are instilled into the child. He is taught the dogma of the Trinity, unacceptable to common sense, the descent of one of these three gods to earth to redeem the human race, his resurrection and ascension to heaven; he is taught to expect the second advent, and punishment with eternal torments for unbelief in these dogmas; he is taught to pray about his wants, and much else. And when all these conceptions, opposed both to reason and to modern knowledge, as well as to the human conscience, are ineffaceably printed on the receptive mind

of the child, he is left alone to discriminate as he can among all those contradictions which follow from the dogmas he has accepted and assimilated as the very truth. No one tells him how he can and should reconcile these contradictions, and if theologians endeavor to reconcile them, their efforts only still further confuse the matter. And so by degrees the man becomes accustomed (and in this the theologians vigorously support him) to the idea that one cannot trust in reason and that therefore everything is possible in the world, and that in man there is nothing by the aid of which he can distinguish for himself good from evil and falsehood from truth; and that in what is most important for him — his conduct — he must be guided, not by his reason, but by what other men tell him. One can understand what a terrible distortion must be produced in the spiritual part of man by such an education, maintained in maturity by all the means of hypnotic suggestion which are continually being applied to the people by the aid of the priesthood.

And if a man of strong spirit with great difficulty and sufferings frees himself from the hypnotic influence in which he was educated in childhood and confirmed in maturity, then the distortion of his mind produced by the persuasion that he must not trust his reason, cannot pass away without leaving traces, just as in the physical world the infection of an organism with a powerful poison cannot pass without traces. Having freed himself from the hypnotism of this deceit, such a man, hating the lie from which he has just escaped, will naturally adopt that theory of the leaders in which all religion is regarded as one of the principal obstacles to the advance of humanity along the way of progress. And having adopted this view, such a man will become, like his teachers, an unprincipled man; that is, without conscience, guided in life only by his lusts, and far from condemning himself for this, will regard himself as on the highest plane of mental development accessible to humanity.

So it will be with the strong man. Whereas the

weaker ones, although they may awake to doubt, will never altogether liberate themselves from that deceit in which they were educated, and accepting and inventing various ingeniously woven cloudy theories intended to justify the senselessness of the accepted dogmas, living in a region of doubts, mists, sophisms, and self-deceit, will only contribute to the blinding of the masses and to hindering their awakening.

And the masses, possessing neither the power nor the possibility of struggling with the hypnotic influence they are subjected to, will live and die, generation after generation, as they do now, bereft of the highest human welfare, — of a true religious understanding of life, — and will always be a passive tool in the hands of the classes which rule and deceive them.

And it is this terrible deceit that the scientific leading men say is not important and is not worth while fighting! The only explanation of such an assertion, if those who make it are sincere, is, that they are themselves under the hypnotism of false science. And, if they are not sincere, is, that to attack established beliefs is disadvantageous and often dangerous. One way or the other, at all events, the assertion that the profession of a false religion is harmless or merely unimportant, and that therefore one can spread enlightenment without destroying the religious deceit, is utterly untrue.

The salvation of mankind from their calamities lies only in their emancipation from that hypnotic influence in which they are held by their priests, as well as from that into which they are led by the scientists. Before one can pour anything into a vessel one must first empty it of what it already contains. So also it is necessary to free men from the deceit in which they are held in order that they may accept true religion, that is, a true relation to the source of all, — God, — corresponding to the development of humanity, and a guide for their actions deduced from this relation.

CHAPTER XIV

"But does a true religion really exist? All religions are infinitely different, and one has no right to call any particular religion the true one merely because it corresponds most nearly to our tastes," those will say who examine religions in their externalities as some sort of disease, from which they feel themselves free, but from which others are still suffering. But this is untrue: Religions are different in their external forms, but they are all the same in their fundamental principles. And it is just these fundamental principles of all religions which represent that true religion which alone today is natural to all men, and the acceptation of which can alone save men from their calamities.

Humanity has existed for a long period, and just as it has from generation to generation elaborated its practical acquisitions, so also it could not help elaborating those spiritual principles which have formed the basis of its life, and the rules of conduct which follow from these principles. That blind men do not see them is no proof that they do not exist.

Such a modern religion, common to all men, — not some one particular religion with all its peculiarities and distortions, but a religion consisting of those principles which are the same in all the religions obtaining among men and known to us, professed by more than nine-tenths of the human race, — such a universal religion does exist, and men have not yet become finally brutalized only because the best men of all nations adhere to this religion and profess it, even though unconsciously, and it is only the inculcation of deceit which is practised on men by the aid of the priests and the scientists which hinders them from accepting it consciously.

The principles of this true religion are so natural to men that the moment they are communicated they are accepted as something long familiar and self-evident. For us this true religion is Christianity, in those of its

principles in which it coincides, not with the external forms, but with the fundamental principles of Brahmanism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Buddhism, even Mohammedanism. In the same way, for those who profess Brahmanism, Confucianism, and so on, the true religion will be the one the fundamental principles of which coincide with those of all the other great religions. And these principles are very simple, comprehensible, and not numerous.

They assert that there is a God, the source of all; that in man there is a particle of this divine element which he can either diminish or increase by his life; that to increase this element man must suppress his passions and increase love in himself; and that the practical means to attain this is to act with others as one wishes others to act toward oneself. All these principles are common to Brahmanism and Judaism and Confucianism and Taoism and Buddhism and Christianity and Mohammedanism. (If Buddhism gives no definition of God it nevertheless recognizes that with which man unites and into which he is immersed when he reaches Nirvana. So that what man is united with when immersed in Nirvana is the same essence which is recognized as God in Christianity, Judaism, and Mohammedanism.)

"But this is not religion," the men of our times who are accustomed to accept what is supernatural, that is, senseless, as the chief feature of religion, will say; "this is anything you may like: philosophy, ethics, reason, but not religion." Religion, according to their conception, must be senseless and incomprehensible (*credo quia absurdum*). And yet it was only out of these very principles, or rather out of their being taught as religious doctrine, that by a long process of distortion all the absurdities about miracles and supernatural events which are regarded as the fundamental features of religion were elaborated. To assert that the supernatural and irrational elements represent the essential features of religion, is like a man, while looking only at rotten apples, asserting that a repulsive

flavor and a pernicious effect on the digestion are the essential qualities of the apple as a fruit.

Religion must define the relation of man to the source of all, the destiny of man which follows from this relation, and the rules of conduct from this destiny. And the universal religion, the fundamental principles of which are identical in all faiths, entirely satisfies these demands. It defines the relation of man to God as that of a part to the whole; it deduces from this relation the function of man as the increase in himself of the divine element; and from this function it deduces practical rules from the principle of acting toward others as one wishes others to act toward oneself.

People often doubt, and I have myself at one time doubted, that such an abstract rule as the one that we should act toward others as we desire others to act toward oneself could be as obligatory a rule and guide in one's conduct as the more simple rules about fasting, prayer, communion, etc. But this doubt is irrefutably answered, if by nothing else, by the spiritual condition of the Russian peasant, who will rather die than spit the sacrament into the dust, although in obedience to the commands of men he is ready to kill his brothers.

Why should not the demands deduced from the rule of acting toward others as one wishes them to act toward oneself, — not to kill one's brothers, not to abuse men, not to commit adultery, not to revenge, not to profit by the need of one's brothers to satisfy one's fancies, and so on, — why should not these demands be instilled with the same strenuousness and become as obligatory and untransgressible as faith in the sanctity of the sacrament, *ikons*, and so on, for those whose faith is founded more on confidence than on a clear inner consciousness?

CHAPTER XV

The truths of the universal religion of to-day are so simple, comprehensible, and near to the heart of every one that it would seem sufficient for all parents,

rulers, and teachers — instead of the outlived and senseless doctrines of Trinities, virgin mothers, redemptions, Indras and Trimourtis, of Buddhas flying away into the skies, of Mohammeds, in which they often do not themselves believe — to instil into children and adults those clear, simple truths of the religion common to all men, the metaphysical essence of which is that the Spirit of God lives in man, and the practical rule of which is that man should act toward others as he wishes others to act toward himself, — for the whole life of mankind to change of itself.

If instead of the faith that children are now taught and adults are confirmed in, that God sent His Son to redeem the sins of Adam, and to establish His Church which must be obeyed, and the consequent rule that one should pray and bring offerings at certain times and at certain places, and refrain from a given food at a given time and on certain days from work, — if instead of this they were taught and confirmed in the faith that God is a Spirit whose image lives in us, the power of which we can increase by our conduct; — if only they were taught this and all that naturally follows from these principles, in the same way that they are taught at present those unnecessary legends, about impossible events and the rules of the senseless rituals which follow from such tales, — then, instead of irrational strife and separation, very soon, without the help of diplomatists, international law, peace congresses, political economists, and socialists of all sections, a peaceful, friendly, happy life would come about for humanity, directed by this sole religion.

But nothing of the sort is attempted: not only is the deceit of false religion not destroyed and the true religion not preached, but on the contrary more and more men farther and farther recede from the possibility of accepting the truth.

The chief reason why people do not do what is so natural, necessary, and possible, is that men of to-day, owing to a prolonged irreligious life, have become so accustomed to organize and establish their mode of liv-

ing by violence, — bayonets, bullets, prisons, gallows, — that they imagine such an order of life is not only normal, but that no other is possible. Not only those to whom the existing order is advantageous think this, even those who suffer from it are so stupefied by the hypnotic influence practised upon them that they also regard violence as the only means of securing good order in human society. And yet more than anything else this organization and establishment of social life by violence removes men from the possibility of understanding the causes of their sufferings, and therefore from the possibility of true order; — like an incapable or ill-intentioned doctor when he drives inward a virulent eruption, thus not only deceiving the patient by his action, but increasing the disease itself and rendering a cure impossible.

To the rulers who have enslaved the masses and who think and say "After us, the Deluge," it appears very convenient, by the means of the army, the clergy, the police, and of the threats of bayonets, bullets, prisons, workhouses, gallows, to compel the enslaved people to continue to live in their stupefaction and slavery, and not to hinder the rulers from enjoying their position. And the rulers do this, and call it "right order," whereas nothing hinders true social order so much as this. In reality such an organization is not only not right order, but an organization of evil.

If the men of our world with the remnants of religious principles which still exist in the masses, had not continually before their eyes the crimes of those who had taken upon themselves the duty of conserving social order and social morality, — by wars, executions, prisons, taxation, the sale of intoxicants and opium, — they would never have dreamed of carrying out one hundredth part of those evil deeds, deceits, acts of violence, murders, which they now carry out in the full persuasion that such deeds are good and natural.

The law of human life is of such a nature that the improvement of life, of the individual as well of society, is possible only by inward moral perfecting. Whereas

all the efforts of men to improve their life by external influence and coercion serve as the most effective propaganda and example of evil, and therefore fail not only to improve life, but on the contrary increase the evil, which, like a snowball, continually grows larger and larger, and more and more removes people from the only possibility of truly improving their life.

In proportion as the habit of violence and crimes practised under the guise of law by the custodians of order and morality themselves becomes more and more frequent and cruel, and is justified in greater measure by the inculcation of falsehood uttered as religion, people become more and more firmly established in the idea that the law of their life is not love and mutual service, but struggle and the devouring of each other.

And the more they become confirmed in this idea, which lowers them to the plane of animals, the more difficult is it for them to awaken from that hypnotic influence to which they are subjected, and to accept as the basis of life that true religion of our time common to all humanity.

A vicious circle is established. The absence of religion renders an animal life founded on violence possible, and this animal life founded on violence renders more and more impossible liberation from the hypnotic influence and the assimilation of true religion. And this is why people do not do what is natural, possible, and necessary in our time: do not destroy the deceit of the semblance of religion and do not accept and preach the true religion.

CHAPTER XVI

Is any issue out of this enchanted circle possible, and where is it?

It seems at first that the Governments, having taken upon themselves the duty of guiding the life of nations for the welfare of the nations, ought to lead men out of the circle. So those who have endeavored to replace the

order of life founded on violence by a rational one founded on mutual service and love have always thought. So also thought Christian reformers, as well as the founders of the various theories of European Communism, and so also thought the famous Chinese reformer, Mi-Ti, who proposed to the Government to teach children in the schools not military sciences and exercies, and to give rewards to adults not for military exploits, but to teach children and adults the rules of respect and love, and to distribute prizes and encouragements for exploits of love.

And thus also many Russian religious reformers from the people have thought, whom I have known and of whom I now know many, from Sutaief to the old man who has already submitted a petition to the Emperor five times, begging him to command the canceling of the false religion and the preaching of true Christianity.

People naturally think that Governments who justify their existence by their care of national welfare must, in order to insure this welfare, desire to use that sole means which cannot in any way harm the people, but only produce the most fruitful results. But Governments have not only never and nowhere taken this duty upon themselves, but on the contrary have always and everywhere defended with the greatest jealousy the existing false and outlived religious teaching, and persecuted by every means those who have attempted to transmit to the people the foundations of true religion. And indeed it cannot be otherwise: for Governments to reveal the falsehood of the existing religion and to preach the true one would be like a man chopping the branch on which he is sitting.

But if Governments do not do this, it would seem that it certainly ought to be done by those men of science who, having freed themselves from the deceit of false religion, desire as they say to serve the people who have reared them. But these men, like the Governments, do not do this. Firstly, because they regard it as inexpedient to subject themselves to the unpleasant-

nesses and dangers of persecutions by the Governments for revealing the deceit upheld by the Governments, and which, according to the conviction of these men, will disappear of itself; secondly, because, regarding all religions as outlived errors, they have nothing to offer the people in the place of the deceit which they might overthrow.

There remain those great masses of unlearned people under the hypnotic influence of the Church and Government deceit, and who therefore regard the semblance of religion instilled into them as the only true religion, believing that there is not and cannot be any other. These masses are under the continual strenuous influence of hypnotism; generation after generation is born, lives, and dies in that stupefied state in which it is held by the priesthood and Government; and if any become freed from it, they inevitably drop into the scientific school, which denies religion, and their influence becomes as useless and harmful as the influence of their teachers.

So that for some it is disadvantageous, for others it is impossible.

CHAPTER XVII

It looks as if there were no issue.

And indeed for irreligious people there is and can be no issue from this position; people who belong to the higher ruling classes, even if they pretend that they are anxious about the welfare of the masses, will never (nor can they, being guided by worldly motives) seriously destroy that stupefaction and enslavement in which these masses live, and which give the higher classes the possibility of ruling over them. In the same way those also who belong to the enslaved, in like manner being guided by worldly motives, cannot desire to render worse their at present difficult position by struggling with the higher classes for the purpose of revealing the false teaching and preaching the true.

Neither have they any reason for doing so, and if they are intelligent men they never will do it.

But this is not so with religious people — those who, however depraved society may be, always by their lives preserve that sacred fire of religion without which human life could not exist. There are times (such is the present one) when these men are not seen, when, despised and humiliated by every one, they pass their lives obscurely, as with us in Russia, in exile, prisons, penal battalions, — but they exist, and on them depends the rational life of mankind. And it is these religious people, however few they may be, who alone can and will sever that enchanted circle in which men are riveted. These men can do this because all those disadvantages and dangers which prevent the worldly man from opposing the existing order of life, not only do not exist for the religious man, but increase his zeal in the struggle with falsehood, and in the profession by word and deed of that which he regards as divine truth. If he belongs to the ruling classes, he will not only not desire to conceal the truth out of regard to his advantageous position, but, on the contrary, having come to abhor these advantages, he will use all the powers of his soul to free himself from these advantages and to preach the truth, as he will no longer have any other object in life than that of serving God. If, on the other hand, he belongs to the enslaved, then, having likewise abandoned the desire common to people of his position, of bettering the conditions of his physical life, such a man will have no other object than the fulfilment of the will of God by revealing falsehood and professing the truth, and no sufferings or threats will any longer compel him to cease to live in accordance with that sole meaning which he has recognized in his life. Both the one and the other will act thus as naturally as the worldly man labors and undergoes privations for the possession of riches and for satisfying the ruler from whom he expects

advantages. Every religious man acts thus because the human soul enlightened by religion no longer lives merely by the life of this world as irreligious people live, but lives by the eternal, infinite life, for which sufferings and death in this life are as insignificant as the corns on his hand and the fatigue of his limbs are insignificant to a laborer plowing a field.

It is these people who will sever the enchanted circle in which men are now riveted. However few they may be, however low their social position, however weak they may be in education and intellect, these men, as surely as fire ignites the dry prairie, will ignite the whole world, — all the hearts of men dried up from a long period of irreligious life and thirsting for renovation.

Religion is not a faith established once for all in supernatural events, supposed to have taken place at some time or other, or in the necessity of certain prayers and rites; neither is it, as the scientists think, the remains of the superstitions of ancient unenlightenment which in our time have no significance or adaptation to life: Religion is the relation of man to eternal life, to God, in accordance with reason and contemporary knowledge, which alone moves man forward toward the end for which he is intended.

"The human soul is a lamp of God," says a wise Hebrew proverb. Man is a weak, miserable animal until in his soul there burns the fire of God. But when this fire kindles (and it kindles only in a soul illumined by religion) man becomes the most powerful being in the world. And this cannot be otherwise, because then it is no longer *his* power which works in him, but the power of God.

So this is what religion is, and in what its essence consists.

ON RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE

(*January* 10, 1902)

I

IN Russia there are missionaries whose duty it is to convert into orthodoxy all who are not orthodox. At the end of 1901 a congress of such missionaries assembled in the town of Orel. Toward the close the *Maréchal de la Noblesse* of the district, Mr. Stakhovitch, uttered a speech in which he proposed that the Congress should recognize the complete liberty of conscience; implying by that term, as he expressed it, "not only liberty of belief, but also liberty of external manifestation, which includes the liberty of falling away from orthodoxy, and even of seducing others into heterodoxy." Mr. Stakhovitch considered that such liberty would only contribute to the triumph and spread of the orthodoxy in which he professed himself a believer.

The members of the Congress did not agree with Mr. Stakhovitch's proposal, and did not even discuss it. Later on an animated discussion and controversy ensued in the newspapers and periodicals as to whether the Orthodox Church should or should not be tolerant. Some — the majority of both the orthodox clergy and the laity — were opposed to tolerance, and recognized for one reason or another the impossibility of abandoning the persecution of the seceding members of the Church. Others — the minority — agreed with Stakhovitch's opinion, approved of him, and demonstrated the desirability and even the necessity for the Church itself of recognizing liberty of conscience.

Those who disagreed with Mr. Stakhovitch claimed

that the Church which gives men eternal welfare cannot but use all the measures at its disposal to save its feeble-minded members from eternal perdition, and that one of these measures is the establishment by the authorities of obstacles to secession from the true Church and to seduction of its members. But above all, they said, the Church which has received from God the power of binding and unbinding always knows what it is about when it employs violence against its enemies; whilst the reasoning of laymen about the justice or injustice of clerical action only demonstrates the error of worldly men in permitting themselves to condemn the actions of the Infallible Church.

Thus said, and are saying, the opponents of religious tolerance; whereas its advocates assert that it is unjust to oppose by force the profession of faiths in disagreement with orthodoxy, and that the distinctions drawn by the opponents of religious tolerance between belief and its external expression have no foundation, as every belief must inevitably be expressed in external actions.

Besides this, said they, for the true Church, which has for its source Christ and his promise that "the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it," there can be no danger from the preaching of a small number of heretics or seceders; and the more so that persecutions themselves do not attain their object, as martyrdom only weakens the moral authority of the persecuting Church and increases the strength of the persecuted.

II

The supporters of religious tolerance say that the Church should in no cases use violence against its dissenting members and the professors of other faiths. The Church should not use violence! But here the question involuntarily suggests itself: How can the Church use violence?

"*The Christian Church*," according to the definition it assumes itself, "*is a society of men established by God*

and having for its object the transmission to mankind of the true faith which saves them both in this world and in the world to come."

How, then, can such a society of men, possessing as its instruments grace and doctrine, desire to and actually commit violence toward those who do not acknowledge its tenets?

To advise the Church not to persecute seceders or those who seduce its members is exactly like recommending an academy of scientists not to have recourse to persecutions, exiles, executions, and so on, of those who disagree with its opinions. An academy of scientists *cannot* desire to do so, and even if it did it could not do these things, as it does not possess the necessary instruments. So also with the Church. The Christian Church, according to its very definition, *cannot* desire to use violence against those who disagree with it, and even if it did so desire, it cannot commit the violence, as it does not possess the necessary instruments. What is the significance, then, of those persecutions which have been committed by the Christian Church since the time of Constantine, which continue yet, and which the supporters of religious tolerance advise the Church to abandon?

III

Mr. Stakhovitch, citing in his speech the words of Guizot about the necessity of freedom of conscience in religious teaching, quotes after these good and clear words the bad and confused words of Aksakoff, who substitutes the idea of *Church* for the idea of *Christian Religion*, and having committed this substitution, endeavors to prove the possibility and necessity of tolerance in the Church. But the Christian Religion and the Christian Church are not the same, and we have no right to suppose that what is natural to the Christian Religion is also natural to the Christian Church.

The Christian Religion is the highest consciousness of man of his relation to God to which humanity has

attained, ascending from the lowest to the highest step of religious consciousness. And therefore the Christian Religion, and all men professing the true Christian Religion, knowing that man has attained to a certain degree of clearness and height of religious consciousness, thanks only to the unceasing progress of mankind from darkness to light, cannot be intolerant. Acknowledging themselves in possession only of a certain degree of truth, which continually more and more clarifies itself, rising by the common efforts of humanity, — the professors of the true Christian Religion when meeting beliefs new to them and disagreeing with their own, not only refrain from condemning and rejecting such faiths, but gladly greet, study, reëxamine, according to them their own belief, reject what disagrees with reason, accept what clarifies and elevates the truth they profess, and are still more confirmed in what is common to all faiths.

Such is the nature of the Christian Religion in general, and thus act those who profess true Christianity. But not so with the Church. The Church, recognizing itself as the only keeper of the full, divine, eternal, forever unchangeable truth disclosed to men by God Himself, cannot but regard every declaration of religious teaching expressed otherwise than in its own dogmas as a lying, pernicious teaching (even intentionally evil when it proceeds from those who know the tenets of the Church) which draws men into eternal perdition. And therefore, according to its own definition, the Church cannot be tolerant and cannot refrain from using against all expressions and all preachers of faiths which disagree with itself all those means which it regards as in line with its position. So that the Christian Religion and the Christian Church are completely different conceptions. It is true that every Church asserts that it is the only representative of Christianity; but the Christian Religion, that is, the profession of the free Christian Religion, by no means admits that the Church is the representative of Christianity. Adherents to the Christian Religion even cannot do so, as there are many Churches, and each one regards itself as the only vessel

of the complete Divine Truth. It is this confusion of the two different conceptions, continually employed for various purposes by Churchmen, which accounts for the fact that all their arguments about the desirability of tolerance for the Church suffer from a common vagueness, pomposity, incompleteness, and entire want of persuasiveness.

Such are all the arguments about this subject in our country of the Homiakoffs, Samarins, Aksakoffs, and others, and from this same feature does Mr. Stakhovitch's speech suffer. It is all not only empty but also harmful gossip, again blowing incense smoke into the eyes of those who have just begun to free themselves from the deceit.

IV

So that the answer to the question: How the Church which defines itself as a society of men having for their object the preaching of the truth, and which has not and cannot have any instruments of violence, can use violence against the faiths which disagree with itself? is simply this: That the institution which calls itself the Christian Church is not a Christian institution, but a secular one; an organization disagreeing with Christianity, and, if anything, inimical to it.

When this thought came to me for the first time I did not believe it (so firmly, from childhood, is the reverence toward the sanctity of the Church instilled into all of us). I at first thought that this was a paradox, that in such a definition of the Church there was some mistake. But the more I examined this question from different sides the more certain it became to me that the definition of the Church as an organization not Christian but inimical to Christianity is an entirely exact definition, without which it is impossible to explain to oneself all those contradictions which are included in the past and present activities of the Church.

And, really, what is the Church? The communicants say that it is a society established by Christ, to which

has been confided the exclusive guardianship and interpretation of the indubitable Divine Truth, guaranteed by the descent of the Holy Ghost on the members of Church; and that this witness of the Holy Ghost is transferred from generation to generation by the laying on of hands established by Christ.

But one need only carefully examine the data by which this is proved to become convinced that all these assertions are quite arbitrary.

Those two texts (in those writings which the Church regards as sacred), upon which rest the proofs of the establishment of the Church by Christ Himself, have not at all the meaning attributed to them. And by no means can they signify the establishment of the Church, as the very idea of "the Church" at the time of the writing of the Gospels, and still more at the time of Christ, did not even exist.

The third text upon which the exclusive right of the Church to teach divine truth is apt to be founded — the concluding verses of Mark and Matthew — are recognized as forgeries by all the experts of the Gospel manuscripts.

Even less can it be proved that the descent of the fiery tongues on the heads of the disciples, seen only by the disciples, demonstrates that all which was to be said, not only by these disciples, but also by all on whom they were to lay their hands, is said by God (that is, by the Holy Ghost), and therefore is an eternally unquestionable truth.

But, above all, even if this were proved (which is quite impossible), even then there is no possibility of proving that this gift of infallibility exists precisely in that Church which asserts it of itself. The chief and insoluble difficulty is that the Church is not One, and that every Church asserts that It alone is in the truth and all the others in error. So that, as a matter of fact, the assertion of each Church that it alone is in the truth has exactly as much weight as the assertion of any man who swears, "By God, I am right, and all who disagree with me are wrong."

"By God, we alone compose the true Church" — in this, and this alone, consists all the proof of the infallibility of any Church. Such a basis, while being both very unstable and false, has besides this defect, that, excluding all verification of anything preached by a Church claiming infallibility for itself, it opens a limitless field for every kind of the strangest fantasies taught as the truth. And when irrational and fantastic assertions are taught as the truth, then there naturally appear men who protest against such assertions. And in order to compel people to believe in irrational and fantastic assertions there is but one means — coercion.

The whole of the Nicene Creed is a network of irrational and fantastic assertions which could arise only amongst men who recognized themselves as infallible, and could spread only by compulsion.

"God the Father gave birth before Time to God the Son, from whom all emanated. This Son was sent into the world for the salvation of men, and there he was again born from a virgin, and was crucified, and arose, and ascended into heaven, where he is now sitting on the right hand of the Father. And at the end of the world this Son will come to judge the living and the dead;" — and all this is an indisputable truth revealed by God Himself!

If we in the twentieth century cannot accept all these dogmas, contrary both to common sense and human knowledge, so also in the time of the Nicene Creed people were not deprived of common sense and could not agree with all these strange dogmas; and they expressed their disagreement with them. And the Church, regarding itself in the sole possession of the full truth, could not admit this disagreement, and naturally used the most peremptory means against this denial and its diffusion — coercion. Admitting the use of violence in certain cases, as, for instance, in war and punishments, the Church naturally regarded as even more permissible and lawful the use of violence against

men who by their false teaching thrust others into eternal perdition.

The Church, united to power, has always used violence — concealed violence, but nevertheless most decided and effective. It gathered taxes from every one by violence without inquiring whether they agreed or not with the established faith, but demanding of all its profession.

Having this money collected by coercion it organized with it a most powerful instrument of hypnotism for the purpose of establishing amongst children and adults its own faith alone. And when this instrument was not sufficient it used its power to coerce directly. So that in a Church supported by the State there can be no mention of religious tolerance.

And this cannot be otherwise while Churches are Churches.

It will be said that Churches like the Quakers, Wesleyans, Shakers, Mormons, and at the present time especially Roman Catholics, collect money from their members without using the power of coercion, and therefore do not use violence to support themselves. But this is incorrect: the money collected by wealthy people, and especially by Roman Catholic congregations during ages of paid hypnotism, are not free gifts of their members, but result from coercion in its crudest form. Money is always collected by the aid of coercion and is always the tool of coercion. Before a Church can regard itself as tolerant it must be free from all monetary influence. "Freely ye have received, freely give."

V

The Church, as a matter of fact, does *not* possess instruments of violence. Violence, if it is used, is used not by the Church itself, but by the power with which the Church is united. And therefore the question arises: Why do the Governments and ruling

classes support the Church? It would seem that the beliefs preached by the Church ought to be indifferent to the Governments and the ruling classes. It would seem that it ought to be just the same to the Governments and ruling classes whatever the peoples they govern believe: whether they are Protestants, Catholics, Greek-Orthodox, Mohammedan. But this is not so. In all times religious beliefs correspond to the social organization; that is, social organization develops according to religious beliefs. And therefore: As the religious belief of the peoples, so is the social organization. This the Governments and ruling classes know, and therefore they always support that religious teaching which corresponds to their advantageous position. The Governments and ruling classes know that the true Christian religion repudiates power founded on violence, repudiates the distinction of classes, the accumulation of riches, executions, wars — all by which the Governments and ruling classes occupy their advantageous position. Therefore they find it necessary to support that faith which justifies their position. And Christianity, perverted by the Churches, does this, and in addition affords the advantage that, having perverted *true* Christianity, it conceals from men the approach to it.

The Governments and ruling classes could not exist without the perversion of Christianity, which is called the Church Faith. The Church with its deceit could not exist without the help of direct or indirect coercion on the part of the Governments and the ruling classes. In some states this coercion shows itself in persecutions, in others in the exclusive patronage by the wealthy ruling classes. And the possession of riches is possible only by violence. And therefore the Church and the Governments and the ruling classes mutually uphold each other. So that the opponents of religious tolerance are quite right in defending violence and persecution, upon which depends the existence of the Church. While the advocates of tolerance would be right only if they applied not to the Church but to the

State, and demanded what is incorrectly termed *the separation of Church from State*, but which in reality is only the cessation of the exclusive Governmental support by direct violence or indirectly by subsidizing any one particular faith.

But to demand from the Church that it should abandon coercion in any form whatever is like demanding of a foe besieged on all sides that he should disarm and give himself up into the hands of his enemies.

Only true, free Christianity, untrammeled by any worldly institutions, and therefore afraid of nothing and no one, and having for its aim only the greater and greater knowledge of the divine truth and its greater and greater realization in life, can be tolerant.

"NOTES FOR OFFICERS"

(*December* 20, 1901)

"It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him through whom they come." — LUKE xvii. 1, 2.

IN all Russian barracks there hang, nailed to the wall, the so-called "Notes for Soldiers"[1] composed by General Dragomiroff. These notes are a collection of stupidly braggart sentences intermixed with blasphemous citations from the Gospels, and written in an artificial barrack slang, which is, in reality, quite strange to every soldier. The Gospel citations are quoted in order to corroborate the statements that soldiers should kill and tear with their teeth the enemy: "If your bayonet breaks, strike with your fists; if your fists give way, bite with your teeth." The notes conclude with the statement that God is the soldiers' General: "God is your General."

Nothing illustrates more convincingly than these notes that terrible degree of unenlightenment, servile submissiveness, and brutality which Russian men have attained to at present. Since this most horrible blasphemy appeared and was first hung up in all the barracks (a considerable time ago), not one commander, nor priest — whom this distortion of the meaning of the Gospel texts would seem to concern directly — has expressed any condemnation of this obnoxious work, and it continues to be published in millions of copies and to be read by millions of soldiers who accept this dreadful production as a guide to their conduct.

These notes revolted me long ago, and now, being

[1] "Notes for Soldiers" (Soldatskaya Pamiatka), by General Dragomiroff, 19th ed. See p. 73. — EDS.

afraid I may otherwise miss the opportunity of doing so before my death, I have now written an appeal to soldiers,[1] in which I have endeavored to remind them that as men and Christians they have quite other duties toward God than those put forward in the notes. And a similar reminder is required, I think, not only by soldiers, but still more so by officers (by "officers" I mean all military authorities, from Subalterns to Generals), who enter the military service or continue in it, not by compulsion as privates do, but by their own free will. It was pardonable a hundred or fifty years ago, when war was regarded as an inevitable condition of the life of nations, when the men of the country with whom one was at war were regarded as barbarians, without religion, and evil-doers, and when it did not enter the mind of military men that they were required for the suppression and "pacification" of one's own people, — it was pardonable then to put on a multi-colored uniform trimmed with gold braid and to saunter about with a clashing sword and jingling spurs, or to caracole in front of one's regiment, imagining oneself a hero, who, if he has not yet sacrificed his life for the defense of his fatherland, is nevertheless ready to do so. But at the present time, when frequent international communications, commercial, social, scientific, artistic, have so brought nations in touch with one another that any contemporary international war is like a dispute in a family, and breaks the most sacred human ties, — when hundreds of peace societies and thousands of articles, not only in special but also in the ordinary newspapers, unceasingly demonstrate from every side the senselessness of militarism, and the possibility, even necessity, of abolishing war; — at the present time, when, above all, the military are more and more often called out, not against foreign foes to repel invasions, or for the aggrandizement of the glory and power of their country, but against unarmed factory workmen or peasants, — at the present time to caracole on one's

[1] See p. 67. — Eds.

little horse in one's little embroidered uniform and to advance dashingly at the head of one's company, is no longer a silly, pardonable piece of vanity as it was before, but something quite different.

In past times, in the days say of Nicholas I., it entered into no one's head that troops are necessary chiefly to shoot at unarmed populaces. But at present troops are permanently stationed in every large town and manufacturing centre for the purpose of being ready to disperse gatherings of workmen; and seldom a month passes without soldiers being called out of their barracks with ball cartridges and hidden in secret places in readiness to shoot the populace down at any moment.

The use of troops against the people has become indeed not only customary, — they are mobilized in advance to be in readiness for this very purpose; and the Governments do not conceal the fact that the distribution of recruits in the various regiments is intentionally conducted in such a way that the men are never drafted into a regiment stationed in the place from which they are drawn. This is done for the purpose of avoiding the possibility of soldiers having to shoot at their own relations.

The German Emperor, at every fresh call for recruits, has openly declared and still declares that soldiers who have been sworn in belong to him, body and soul; that they have only one foe — his foe; and that this foe are the Socialists (that is, workmen), whom the soldiers must, if he bids them, shoot down (*niederschiessen*), even if they should be their own brothers or even parents.

In past times, moreover, if the troops were used against the people, those against whom they were used were, or at all events were supposed to be, evil-doers, ready to kill and ruin the peaceful inhabitants, and whom therefore it might be supposed to be necessary to destroy for the general good. But at present every one knows that those against whom troops are called out are for the most part peaceful, industrious men, who merely desire to profit unhindered by the fruits of their labors. So that the principal permanent function of

the troops in our time no longer consists in an imaginary defense against irreligious and in general external foes, and not against internal foes in the persons of riotous evil-doers, but in killing one's own unarmed brothers, who are by no means evil-doers, but peaceful, industrious men whose only desire is that they shall not be deprived of their earnings. So that military service at the present time, when its chief object is, by murder and the threat of murder, to keep enslaved men in those unjust conditions in which they are placed, is not only not a noble but a positively dastardly undertaking. And therefore it is indispensable that officers who serve at the present time should consider whom they serve, and ask themselves whether what they are doing is good or evil.

I know that there are many officers, especially of the higher grades, who by various arguments on the themes of orthodoxy, autocracy, integrity of the State, eternal inevitableness of war, necessity of order, inconsistency of socialistic ravings, and so on, try to prove to themselves that their activity is rational and useful, and contains nothing immoral. But in the depths of their soul they themselves do not believe in what they say, and the more intelligent and the older they become the less they believe.

I remember how joyously I was struck by a friend and old comrade of mine, a very ambitious man, who had dedicated his whole life to the military service, and had attained the highest honors and grades (General Aides-de-Camp and Major-General), when he told me that he had burnt his "Memoirs" of the wars in which he had participated because he had changed his view of the military activity, and now regarded every war as an evil deed, which should not be encouraged by participation, but, on the contrary, should be discredited in every way. Many officers think the same, although they do not say so while they serve. And indeed no thoughtful officer can think otherwise. Why, one has only to recall to mind what forms the occupation of all officers, from the lowest to the highest — to the Commandant of an Army Corps. From the beginning to the end of their

service — I am alluding to officers in the active service — their activity, with the exception of the few and short periods when they go to war and are occupied with actual murder, consists in the attainment of two aims: in teaching soldiers the best methods of killing men, and in accustoming them to an obedience which enables them to do mechanically, without argument, everything their commander orders. In olden times it used to be said, "Flog two to death, and train one," and so they did. If at present the proportion of flogged to death is smaller, the principle nevertheless is the same. One cannot reduce men into that state, not of animals but of machines, in which they will commit the deed most repulsive to the nature of man and to the faith he professes, namely, murder, at the bidding of any commander, — unless not only artful frauds but also the most cruel violence have been perpetrated on them. And so it is in practice.

Not long ago a great sensation was created in the French press by the disclosure by a journalist of those awful tortures to which soldiers in the Disciplinary Battalions are submitted on the Island of Obrou, six hours' distance from Paris. The men punished have their hands and feet tied together behind their back and are then thrown to the ground; instruments are fixed on their thumbs while their hands are twisted behind their backs, and screwed up so that every movement produces a dreadful pain; they are hung with their legs upward; and so forth.

When we see trained animals accomplishing things contrary to nature: dogs walking on their fore legs, elephants rolling barrels, tigers playing with lions, and so on, we know that all this has been attained by the torments of hunger, whip, and red-hot iron. And when we see men in uniforms with rifles standing motionless, or performing all together the same movement, — running, jumping, shooting, shouting, and so on, — in general, producing those fine reviews and manœuvers which emperors and kings so admire and show off one before the other, we know the same. One cannot cauterize

out of a man all that is human and reduce him to the state of a machine without torturing him, and torturing not in a simple way but in the most refined, cruel way, — at one and the same time torturing and deceiving him.

And all this is done by you officers. In this all your service consists, from the highest grade to the lowest, with the exception of those rare occasions when you participate in real war.

A youth transported from his family to the other end of the world comes to you, after having been taught that that deceptive oath forbidden by the Gospel which he has taken irretrievably binds him, — as a cock when laid on the floor with a line drawn over its nose and along the floor thinks that it is bound by that line, — he comes to you with complete submissiveness and the hope that you his elders, men more intelligent and learned than he, will teach him all that is good. And you, instead of freeing him from those superstitions which he has brought with him, inoculate him with new, most senseless, coarse, and pernicious superstitions: about the sanctity of the banner, the almost divine position of the Tsar, the duty of absolute obedience to the authorities. And when with the help of the methods for stultifying men which are elaborated in your organization you reduce him to a position worse than animal, to a position where he is ready to kill every one he is ordered to kill, even his unarmed brothers, you exhibit him with pride to your superiors, and receive in return their thanks and rewards. It is terrible to be a murderer oneself, but by cunning and cruel methods to reduce one's confiding brothers to this state is the most terrible crime of all. And this you accomplish, and in this consists the whole of your service.

It is therefore not astonishing that amongst you more than amongst any other class everything which will stifle conscience flourishes: smoking, cards, drunkenness, depravity; and that suicides occur amongst you more frequently than anywhere else.

"It is impossible but that offenses will come, but woe unto him through whom they come."

You often say that you serve because if you did not the existing order would be destroyed and disturbances and every kind of calamities would occur.

But firstly, it is not true that you are concerned with the maintenance of the existing order: you are concerned only with your own advantages.

Secondly, even if your abstinence from military service did destroy the existing order, this would in no way prove that you should continue to do what is wrong, but only that the order which is being destroyed by your abstinence should be destroyed. Were establishments of the most useful kind — hospitals, schools, homes, to depend for their support on the profits from houses of ill-fame, no consideration of the good produced by these philanthropic establishments would retain in her position the woman who desired to free herself from her shameful trade.

"It is not my fault," the woman would say, "that you have founded your philanthropic institutions on vice. I no longer wish to live in vice. As to your institutions, they do not concern me." And so should every soldier say if the necessity of maintaining the existing order founded on his readiness to murder were put before him. "Organize the general order in a way that will not require murder," the soldier should say. "And then I shall not destroy it. I only do not wish to and cannot be a murderer."

Many of you say also: "I was educated thus. I am tied by my position, and cannot escape." But this also is not true.

You can always escape from your position. If, however, you do not, it is only because you prefer to live and act against your conscience rather than lose certain worldly advantages which your dishonest service affords. Only forget that you are an officer and recall to mind that you are a man, and the way of escape from your position will immediately disclose itself to you. This way of escape in its best and most honest form would consist in your calling together the men of whom you are in command,

stepping in front, and asking their pardon for all the evil you have done them by deception — and then cease to serve in the army. Such an action seems very bold, demanding great courage, whereas in reality much less courage is required for such an action than to storm a fortification or to challenge a man to a duel for an insult to the uniform, — which you as a soldier are always ready to do, and do.

But even without being capable of acting thus you can always, if you have understood the criminality of military service, leave it and give preference to any other activity though less advantageous.

But if you cannot do even this, then the solution for you of the question whether you will continue to serve or not will be postponed to that time — and this will soon appear for each one of you — when you will stand face to face with an unarmed crowd of peasants or factory workers, and be ordered to shoot at them. And then, if anything human remains in you, you will have to refuse to obey, and, as a result, to leave the service.

I know that there are still many officers, from the highest to the lowest ranks, who are so unenlightened or hypnotized that they do not see the necessity of either the one, the other, or the third solution, and quietly continue to serve even in the present conditions, ready to shoot at their brothers and even priding themselves upon this; but happily public opinion punishes such people with more and more repulsion and disapproval, and their number continually becomes smaller and smaller.

So that in our time, when the fratricidal function of the army has become evident, officers not only can no longer continue in the ancient traditions of military self-complacent bravado, — they cannot continue the criminal work of teaching murder to simple men confiding in them, and themselves to prepare for participation in murdering unarmed populaces, without the consciousness of their human degradation and shame.

It is this which should be understood and remembered by every thinking and conscientious officer of our time.

"NOTES FOR SOLDIERS"

(*December* 20, 1901)

"Be not afraid of them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body."
— MATT. x. 28.

"We must obey God rather than men." — ACTS v. 29.

YOU are a soldier. You have been taught to shoot, to stab, to march, to do gymnastics. You have been taught to read and write, led to exercises and reviews; perhaps have been in a campaign and have fought with the Turks or Chinese, obeying all your orders. It has not even entered your head to ask yourself whether what you were ordered to do was good or bad.

But suddenly an order is received that your company or squadron shall march out, taking ball cartridges. You go without asking where you are being led.

You are brought to a village or factory, and you see before you gathered in an open space a crowd of villagers or factory hands, — men, women with children, aged folk. The governor and public prosecutor approach the crowd with policemen and say something. The crowd is at first silent, then begins to shout louder and louder; and the authorities retreat. And you guess that the peasants or factory hands are rioting, and that you have been brought to "pacify" them. The authorities several times retreat from the crowd and again approach it, but the shouts become louder and louder, and the authorities consult each other and at last give you the order to load your rifles with the ball cartridges. You see before you men such as those from amongst whom you have been taken, — men in peasants' coats, sheepskin overcoats, and bark shoes, and women in kerchiefs and jackets, — women like your wife and mother.

The first shot is ordered to be fired above the heads

of the crowd. But the crowd does not disperse, and shouts even louder; and you are then ordered to shoot in earnest, not over the heads, but straight into the middle, of the crowd.

It has been instilled into you that you are not responsible for the consequences of your shots. But you know that the man who falls bleeding from your shot is killed by you and by no one else, and you know that you could have refrained from shooting and that then the man would not have been killed.

What are you to do?

It would not be enough to lay down your rifle and refuse in this instance to shoot your brothers; for tomorrow the same thing could reoccur. And therefore, whether you wish it or not, you have to recollect yourselves and ask, "What is this soldier's calling which has brought me to the necessity of shooting my unarmed brothers?"

You are told in the Gospel that one should not only refrain from killing his brothers, but should not do that which leads to murder: one should not be angry with one's brothers, nor hate one's enemies, but love them.

In the law of Moses you are distinctly told, "Thou shalt not kill," without any reservations as to whom you can and whom you cannot kill. Whereas in the regulations which you have been taught you are told that a soldier must fulfil any order whatsoever of his superior, except an order against the Tsar; and in explanation of the Sixth Commandment you are told that although by this commandment killing is forbidden, yet he who kills an enemy during war does not sin against this commandment.[1] And in the "Notes for Soldiers" which hang in your barracks, and which you have many times read and listened to, it is explained how a soldier should kill men: "If three fall on you, shoot one, stab another, and

[1] In your regulations you are told: "By the Sixth Commandment God forbids the taking of man's life by violence or cunning, and the disturbance in any way of one's neighbor's peace and safety; and therefore this commandment also forbids quarrels, anger, hatred, jealousy, cruelty. But he who kills the enemy in war does not sin against the Sixth Commandment, because in war we defend our faith, sovereign, and country."

finish the third with the bayonet. . . . If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth."

You are told that you must kill, because you have taken the oath, and that not you but your commanders will be responsible for your actions.

But before you took the oath, that is, before you promised men to obey their will, it was your duty, without need of oaths, to obey in everything the will of God, of Him who gave you life; and God forbids killing.

So that you could by no means swear that you would obey everything men might command. This is why it is distinctly stated in the Gospel, Matt. v. 34–37: "Swear not at all. . . . But let your speech be, Yea, yea; nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

And in the Epistle of James, chap. v. 12, the same thing is said, "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by the heaven, nor by the earth." So that to take the oath is a sin. As to what they say about your commanders, not yourselves, being responsible for your deeds, this is obviously a falsehood. Is your conscience not in you, but in your sergeant, captain, colonel, or some one else? No one can decide for you what you can and must, and what you cannot and should not do. And a man is always responsible for what he does. Is not the sin of adultery much easier than that of murder? and yet can one man say to another: "Go and commit adultery. I shall bear your sin, because I am your commander"?

According to the Biblical narrative Adam sinned against God, and then said that his wife told him to eat the apple, while his wife said she was tempted by the devil. God exonerated neither Adam nor Eve, but told them that because Adam listened to the voice of his wife he would be punished, and that his wife would be punished for listening to the serpent. And neither were excused, but both were punished. Will not God say the same to you also when you kill a man and say that your captain ordered you to do it?

The deceit is apparent already, because in the regu-

lation obliging a soldier to obey all his commander's orders, these words are added, "*Except such as tend toward the injury of the Tsar.*"

If a soldier before obeying the orders of his commander must first decide whether it is not against the Tsar, how then can he fail to consider before obeying his commander's order whether it is not against his supreme King, God? And no action is more opposed to the will of God than that of killing men. And therefore you *cannot* obey men if they order you to kill. If you obey, and kill, you do so only for the sake of your own advantage, — to escape punishment. So that in killing by order of your commander you are a murderer as much as the thief who kills a rich man to rob him. He is tempted by money, and you by the desire not to be punished, or to receive a reward. Man is always responsible before God for his actions. And no power, whatever the authorities desire, can turn a live man into a dead thing which one can move about as one likes. Christ taught men that they are all sons of God, and therefore a Christian cannot surrender his conscience into the power of another man, no matter by what title he may be called: King, Tsar, Emperor. As to those men who have assumed power over you, demanding of you the murder of your brothers, this only shows that they are deceivers, and that therefore one should not obey them. Shameful is the position of the prostitute who is always ready to give her body to be defiled by any one her master indicates; but yet more shameful is the position of a soldier always ready for the greatest of crimes — the murder of any man whom his commander indicates.

And therefore if you do indeed desire to act according to God's will you have only to do one thing — to throw off the shameful and ungodly calling of a soldier, and be ready to bear any sufferings which may be inflicted upon you for so doing.

So that the true "Notes" for a Christian Soldier are not those in which it is said that "God is the Soldiers' General" and other blasphemies, and that the

soldier must obey his commanders in everything, and be ready to kill foreigners and even his own unarmed brothers, — but those which remind one of the words of the Gospel that one *should obey God rather than men* and fear not those who can kill the body but cannot kill the soul.

In this alone consists the true, unfraudulent "Notes for Soldiers."

In Dragomiroff's "Notes for Soldiers" three passages are quoted from the Gospels: John xv. 10–13 and Matthew x. 22, 39. From John the words of the 13th verse are quoted: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends;" evidently for the purpose of implying that soldiers fighting in battle should defend their comrades to the utmost of their strength.

These words however cannot possibly refer to military action, but mean exactly the reverse. In verses 10–13 it is said: "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be fulfilled. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, even as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

So that the words, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends," do not at all mean that a soldier should defend his comrades, but that a Christian should be ready to surrender his life for the fulfilment of Christ's commandment that men should love one another. And therefore he should be ready to sacrifice his life rather than consent to kill men.

From Matthew the end of the 22d verse of the 10th chapter is quoted, "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved," evidently in the sense that a soldier who fights bravely will be saved from the enemy. But again the meaning of this passage is not at all what the compiler wishes to attribute to it, but a contrary one.

The complete verse is: "And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

So that obviously this verse cannot relate to soldiers, soldiers not being hated by any one for Christ's name: and it is clear therefore that only those people can be hated for Christ's name who refuse in his name to do what the world demands of them, and, in the case in point, soldiers who disobey when murder is demanded of them.

Again, the end of the 39th verse of the 10th chapter of Matthew is quoted: "He that loseth his life shall find it," also in the sense that he who is killed in war will be rewarded in Heaven. But the sense is obviously not this. In the 38th verse it is said, "He that doth not take his cross and follow after me, is not worthy of me," and after this is added, "He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it;" that is, that he who desires to safeguard his corporal life rather than fulfil the teaching of love will lose his true life, but he who does not safeguard his corporal life, but fulfils the teaching of love, will gain the true, spiritual, eternal life.

Thus all the three passages assert, not, as the compiler desired, that in obedience to the Authorities one should fight, and crush, and rend men with one's teeth, but, on the contrary, they all, like the whole Gospel, express one and the same thing, — that a Christian cannot be a murderer and therefore cannot be a soldier. And therefore the words, "A soldier is Christ's warrior," placed in the "Notes" after the Gospel verses, do not at all mean what the compiler imagines. It is true that a soldier, if he be a Christian, can and should be Christ's warrior, but he will be Christ's warrior, not when, obeying the will of those commanders who have prepared him for murder, he kills foreigners who have done him no harm, or even his own unarmed fellow-countrymen, but only when he renounces the ungodly and shameful calling of a soldier, in the name of Christ, — and fights not with external foes but with his own commanders

who deceive him and his brothers, and fights them, not with a bayonet, nor with his fists or teeth, but with humble reasonableness and readiness to bear all suffering and even death rather than remain a soldier, — that is, a man ready to kill any one whom his commanders indicate.

[The following are the "Notes for Soldiers" by General Dragomiroff to which Tolstoï alludes. — Eds.]

"Notes for Soldiers" (Soldatskaya Pamiatka), by General Dragomiroff

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friend." — John xv. 13.
"He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved." — Matt. x. 22.
"He that loseth his life shall find it." — Matt. x. 39.

A soldier is Christ's warrior. As such he should regard himself, and so he should behave.

Consider your corps as your family; your commander as your father; your comrade as your brother; your inferior as a young relative. Then all will be happy and friendly and easy.

Don't think of yourself, think of your comrades; they will think of you. Perish yourself, but save your comrade.

Under fire advance in open order; attack together.

Strike with your fist, not with your open hand.

One leg helps the other, one hand strengthens the other. Stick together. One evil is not an evil; two evils are half an evil; separation is the evil.

Don't expect relief. It won't come. Support will come. When you've thrashed them well, then you'll rest.

Only he is beaten who is afraid.

Always attack, never defend.

If your bayonet breaks, strike with the stock; if the stock gives way, hit with your fists; if your fists are hurt, bite with your teeth. Only he wins who fights desperately, to the death.

In action a soldier is like a sentinel; even dying he should not let his rifle go.

Keep your bullet for three days, even for a whole campaign, when you can't get more. Shoot seldom, but well. With the bayonet strike hard. The bullet may miss the mark, but the bayonet will not. The bullet is stupid, the bayonet is the plucky one.

Aim every bullet; to shoot without care only amuses the devil. Only the careful not the chance bullet finds the culprit. Hold your cartridges. If you spend them a long way off, when you get near, just when you want them, you'll have none. For a good soldier, thirty cartridges are enough for the hottest engagement.

From the dead and wounded take their cartridges.

If you knock up against the enemy unexpectedly or he against you, hit without hesitation. Don't let him collect himself. The plucky one is he who first cries "Hurrah." If three fall on you, shoot one, stab another, and finish the third with your bayonet. God defends the brave.

Where a bold one will get through, God will trip up the timid one.

For a good soldier there are neither flanks nor rear, but all is front, where the foe is.

Always keep your face toward the cavalry. Let it come to two hundred yards, give it a volley, put the bayonet into position, and freeze there.

In war a soldier must expect short commons, short sleep, and sore feet. Because it is war. Even an old soldier finds it difficult, and for a green one it is hard. But if it's hard for you it is n't easier for the enemy; maybe harder still. Only you see your own hardships, but don't see the enemy's. Yet they are always there. So don't grow stale, but the harder it is, the more doggedly and desperately fight; when you've won you'll feel better at once, and the enemy worse. "He that endureth to the end, the same shall be saved."

Don't think that victory can be won straight off. The enemy can also be firm. Sometimes one can't succeed even the second and third times. Go at it a fourth, a fifth, a sixth time, till you win.

When fighting help the sound men. Only think of

the wounded when you have won. The man who bothers about the wounded during the fight and leaves the ranks is a bad soldier and not a kind-hearted man. It is not his comrades who are dear to him but his own skin. If you win it will be well for all, both sound and wounded.

Don't leave your place on the march. If you stop for a minute and fall behind, hurry up and don't lag.

When you reach the bivouac all can't rest. Some must sleep, others guard. He who sleeps, let him sleep in peace till he is wakened; comrades are on guard. He who is on guard, let him watch alertly, though he has marched seventy miles.

When you are an officer, keep your men well in hand. Give your orders intelligently; don't merely cry "Forward, March." First explain what is to be done, so that every man can know where and why he has to go. Then "Forward, March" is all right. Every soldier should understand his actions.

"The chief gets the drink first, and the stick first."

Die for the Orthodox faith, for our father the Tsar, for Holy Russia. The Church prays to God. "He who loses his life will find it." He who survives, to him honor and glory.

Do not offend the native; he feeds and supports. A soldier is not a thief.

Keep yourself clean, your clothes and ammunition in order. Guard your rifle, your biscuits, and your feet as the apple of your eye. Look after your socks (leg bands) and keep them greased. It 's better for the foot.

A soldier should be healthy, brave, hardy, determined, just, pious! Pray to God! From Him is the victory! Noble heroes, God leads you, He is your General!

Obedience, education, discipline, cleanliness, health, tidiness, vigor, courage, dash, victory! Glory, glory, glory!

Lord of Hosts, be with us! We have no other helper than Thee in the day of our trouble! Lord of Hosts, have mercy on us!

TRUE CRITICISM

(A Preface to a Russian Edition of the German Novel, "Der Bütnerbauer," by Von Polenz)

(1901)

LAST year a friend of mine in whose taste I have confidence gave me to read the German novel "Der Bütnerbauer" by Von Polenz. I read it and was surprised that such a work, having appeared two years ago, was known to hardly any one.

This novel is not one of those imitations of artistic work which are produced in such enormous quantities to-day, but a genuine work of art. It belongs neither to those descriptions, devoid of all interest, of persons and events brought into artificial connection merely because the author, having acquired command of the technique of artistic descriptions, desires to write a new novel; nor to those dissertations on a given theme, clothed in the form of drama or novel, which are also palmed off on the public to-day as artistic productions; nor yet does it belong to those other productions called decadent, which especially attract the modern public owing to the fact that they resemble the ravings of a madman, and present a kind of puzzle, the solution of which affords a pleasant occupation and is at the same time regarded as evidence of refinement.

This novel does not belong to either of these three classes: it is a true artistic production in which the author says what he has to say because he loves the subject of which he is speaking; and he expresses himself, not in arguments nor in cloudy allegories, but in the only way in which one can transmit an artistic sub-

ject: by poetic images, — and not fantastic, extraordinary, and incomprehensible images connected without inherent necessity, but images which represent the most ordinary simple persons and events, connected by inherent artistic necessity.

But more than this: it is not only genuinely artistic, it is also a fine piece of artistic work, uniting in the highest degree all the three essential points of a true work of art.

In the first place, its subject is important, as it deals with the life of the peasantry, that is, with that majority of mankind who are at the foundation of all social structures, and who are experiencing in our day, not only in Germany but in all European countries, an oppressive change in their ancient organization. (It is remarkable that almost at the same time as "Der Bütnerbauer" a very tolerable French novel by René Bazin, "La terre que meurt," appeared on the same theme, though of much less artistic merit.)

In the second place, it is written in a very masterly manner in an excellent German, which is particularly powerful when the author makes his characters speak in the rough, manly workingman's idiom.

And in the third place, it is penetrated with love toward the characters whom the author introduces.

For example, in one of the chapters there is a description of how, after a night passed with comrades in drinking-shops, a husband returns home in the morning and knocks at his door. The wife looks out of the window, recognizes her husband, loads him with abuse, and is deliberately slow in letting him in. When at last she opens the door, the husband tumbles in and wants to enter the living room; but the wife tries to prevent him so that the children may not see their father in a drunken state, and pushes him back. He clutches hold of the door-jambs and struggles with her. Generally a quiet man, he suddenly becomes furiously angry (the reason being that the day before she had taken from his pocket some money given him by some one and had concealed it), and in his turn he throws

himself upon her, catches her by the hair, and demands his money.

"I won't give it up for anything!" she repeats in answer to his demands, endeavoring to free herself from him.

Then, losing his head completely, he strikes her at random.

"I will die before I give it up," she says.

"But you shall," he shouts, knocking her off her feet and falling down upon her himself, continuing to claim his money. Receiving no answer, in his insane drunken malice he wants to strangle her. But the sight of blood oozing from beneath her hair and trickling down her forehead and nose arrests him. He is afraid of what he has done, leaves her on the floor, staggers to his bed, and falls down upon it.

The scene is truthful and terrible. But the author loves his characters, and adds one little detail which suddenly illuminates the whole with so bright a ray of light that it forces the reader not only to pity but to love these people, notwithstanding all their coarseness and cruelty. The stricken wife comes to herself, gets up from the floor, wipes the blood from her forehead with a corner of her dress, opens the door, quietens her screaming children, and then looks round for her husband. He is lying on the bed as he fell, but his head is hanging down the side and the blood is rushing into it. The wife approaches him and carefully lifts his head, lays it on the pillow, and then rearranges her dress and disentangles from her head a handful of hair which her husband had torn out.

Dozens of pages of argument could not convey what is expressed in this detail.

Here is revealed to the reader at one and the same time both the consciousness, educated by tradition, of wifely duty, and the triumph of a maintained resolution not to surrender money necessary, not for herself, but for the family. Here we have both injury and forgiveness, pity, and, if not love, the recollection of love toward one's husband, the father of one's children. But more

than this. Such a detail, illuminating the inner life of this wife and this husband, throws a light for the reader upon the inner life of millions of similar husbands and wives, both of those who lived before, and who live now. It calls forth not only respect and love toward these men and women, crushed by labor, but also forces one to reflect on the reason why such people, strong in body and spirit, with such possibilities of a good and loving life, are so neglected, downtrodden, and unenlightened.

And such true artistic features, produced only by love toward the subject of which the author writes, are to be met with in every chapter of this book.

This novel is undoubtedly a fine work of art, as every one who reads it will agree, and yet although it appeared nearly three years ago and although a translation was published in one of our best Russian periodicals, it has passed quite unnoticed both in Russia and Germany. I have inquired about this book of several German literary men I have met lately; they had heard the name of Polenz but had not read his novel, although they had all read Zola's last novels and Kipling's stories and Ibsen's dramas, and D'Annuncio, and even Maeterlinck.

Twenty years ago Matthew Arnold wrote an excellent article about the object of criticism. In his opinion the object of criticism consists in finding what is most important and good amidst all that has been written in any place and at any time, and in drawing the attention of readers to this important and good.

Such a criticism, in our day, when people are being drowned in a flood of newspapers, journals, books, and the development of the art of advertising, appear to me not only necessary — the whole future of the enlightenment of the cultured class of our European world even depends upon whether such a criticism will appear and become authoritative.

The overproduction of any article is harmful; but the overproduction of articles which represent not an end but a means is especially harmful, when this means is regarded as an end.

Horses and carriages as means of locomotion, houses

and clothes as means of shelter, good food as the means of maintaining the strength of one's organism, are all very useful. But as soon as people begin to regard the possession of such means as ends in themselves, believing it good to have as many horses, houses, clothes, and foods as possible, — then these things become not only not useful but distinctly harmful. So it has happened with the production of books in the well-to-do circle of our European society. For a long time past, in the well-to-do circle, the publication of books, which is undoubtedly useful for the great insufficiently educated masses, has been the chief organ for the dissemination of ignorance, and not of enlightenment.

It is very easy to become convinced of this. In our day, books, magazines, and especially newspapers have become great financial undertakings, for the success of which the greatest possible number of consumers is necessary. The interests and tastes of the majority of consumers being always low and coarse, it is necessary, to secure success, that the literary productions shall be concerned with low interests and correspond to low tastes; that is, shall meet the demands of the majority. And the press completely satisfies these demands, which it has the full possibility of doing, as amongst its workers there are always many more with the same low interests and coarse tastes as the public, than with lofty interests and refined tastes. And as these individuals receive ample remuneration for the works they supply to meet the tastes of the masses, owing to the development of book-printing and the new methods of speculating in magazines, newspapers, and books, — that terrible and ever increasing flood of printed paper has appeared which by its volume alone, to say nothing of its contents, presents an immense obstacle to enlightenment.

If, in our day, an intelligent young man from the ranks who wished to educate himself were to obtain access to all the books, journals, and newspapers, and left to himself to choose his reading, then all the chances are that, reading incessantly every day for ten years,

he would read only silly and immoral books. To come across a good book would be for him as improbable as to find a marked pea in a sackful. And the worst of it is that, continually reading bad works, his tastes and understanding would continually become more perverted, so that when he did light on a good work he would either not understand it at all, or misunderstand it.

Besides this, thanks to the eventualities and the skill of modern advertising, some poor works (such for instance as "The Christian," by Hall Caine, a novel false in its subject, and inartistic, which was purchased in enormous quantities) attain, like "Odol" and Pears' Soap, reputations unjustified by their merits. These great reputations continually force a greater number of people to read such books. And while the reputation of insignificant, often harmful, books continually increases like a snowball, a similar snowball, of greater and greater confusion of ideas, and an utter incapacity of understanding the merits of literary works, continually accumulates in the heads of the great majority of men. Therefore, in proportion to the greater and greater circulation of newspapers, magazines, and books, that is to say in general of the increase of book-printing, the level of merit descends lower and lower, and the great mass of the so-called educated public becomes deeper and deeper immersed in the most hopeless, self-complacent, and therefore incurable, ignorance.

In my memory, during the last fifty years, a striking degradation of the taste and common sense of the reading public has taken place. One can see this degradation in all the fields of literature, but I will indicate only a few of the most marked examples known to me. In Russian poetry, for instance, after Pushkin, Lermontoff (Tutcheff is generally forgotten), poetic reputation passed first to the very doubtful poets, Maikoff, Polonsky, Fet; then to Nekrassoff, altogether devoid of poetic talent; then to the artificial and prosaic rhymester Alexis Tolstoï; then to the monotonous and weak Nadson; then to the completely giftless Apouhtin; and

then everything is muddled, and rhymesters appear whose name is legion, who do not know what poetry is, what is the meaning of their writings, nor why they write.

Another striking example is that of the English prose writers: From the great Dickens one descends first to George Eliot, then to Thackeray, from Thackeray to Trollope, and after that begin the indifferent fabrications of Collins, Kiplings, Rider Haggards, and so on. The same, in a yet more striking way, is seen in American literature: after the great Pleiad of Emerson, Thoreau, Lowell, Whittier, and others, there is a sudden break, and beautiful editions with beautiful illustrations appear, containing stories and novels which it is impossible to read for the want of any matter in them.

In our day the ignorance of the educated crowd has already reached the stage when all true great thinkers, poets, prose writers, both of antiquity and of the nineteenth century, are regarded as out of date and no longer capable of satisfying the refined and lofty demands of new humanity; they all are regarded with contempt or with a smile of condescension. The immoral, coarse, bombastic, disjointed prattle of Nietzsche is accepted to-day as the last word of philosophy; a senseless, artificial combination of words connected only by rhyme and rhythm, in various decadent verse, is regarded as poetry of the highest order; in all the theatres plays are given the sense of which is comprehensible to no one, not excepting the author; and novels which contain neither subject nor art are printed and disseminated in millions of copies under the pretext of being works of art.

"What am I to read to complete my education?" a young man or girl asks, upon leaving the higher school. The man from the ranks who has learnt to read and to understand what he reads, and is in search of true enlightenment, asks the same.

The naïve attempt to inquire of distinguished men the hundred books they regard as best is of course insufficient to answer such questions.

Nor is any help afforded by the division, current in our European society and tacitly accepted by every one, of all writers into categories of the first, second, third, etc., orders; into geniuses, men of great talent, talent, merely clever. Such a division not only fails to assist the true understanding of the merits of literature, and the discovery of what is good in the sea of what is bad, but even hinders it. And besides the fact that this division into categories is itself very often mistaken, and is upheld only because it was established long ago and is accepted by every one, — besides this, such a division is harmful because writers who are recognized as of the highest order produce some very bad works, and those of the lowest order some admirable ones. So that the man who accepts the division of writers into categories and the idea that all a first-rate writer produces is excellent, and that all the productions of a man of a lower category, or quite unknown, are necessarily weak, such a man becomes confused in his appreciations, and is deprived of much that is useful and truly enlightening.

Only true criticism can answer the most important question to-day of the youth of the cultured classes who is in search of knowledge, or of the man from the ranks who is in search of enlightenment. Not the criticism existing to-day, the aim of which is to praise the works which have become famous and to invent for their justification cloudy philosophico-esthetic theories. Not the criticism which is occupied in ridiculing, more or less humorously, works considered bad, or those of another camp. And still less the criticism, established and still flourishing amongst us, which has for its object the definition of the direction in which society as a whole is moving, founded on types described by various authors, and in general of expressing the critic's own economic and political views under the guise of reviews of literary works.

The answer to the stupendously important question: What is one to read out of all that is written? can be given only by true criticism, — that criticism whose object, as Matthew Arnold says, is to bring forward and

point out to men all that is best both in past and present writers.

From the event whether such a criticism, — disinterested, independent of any party, understanding and loving art, will appear, or not, and whether its authority will be great enough to overcome the commercial puffing of books — depends, in my opinion, the solution to the question whether the last glimmering of enlightenment will perish in our so-called cultured European society before it has spread amongst the masses; or whether it will revive, as it did in the Middle Ages, and spread amongst the majority of the people, who are now deprived of all enlightenment.

The public ignorance of Polenz's fine novel, as well as of many other good works that are drowned in the sea of printed rubbish, while senseless, insignificant, and even absolutely objectionable literary works are discussed on all sides from every point of view, always praised, and dispersed by the million, has called forth these thoughts in me, and I profit by this occasion, which will hardly present itself to me again, of expressing them, however briefly.

THE ONLY MEANS

(*August*, 1901)

"All things, therefore, whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them : for this is the law and the prophets." — MATT. vii. 12.

I

THERE are more than a thousand millions of working-men in the world. All the bread, all the goods of the whole world, all wherewith people live and are rich, all this is produced by the working-man. But it is not he who profits by the things he produces, but the Government and the rich, — whereas the working population lives in continual need, ignorance, and bondage, and in the contempt of those very people whom they clothe, feed, house, and serve.

The land is taken from the laborer and regarded as the property of those who do not work it, so that in order to be fed by the land the man who works it must do everything the owners demand. If the laborer leaves the land, and enters service or mills or factories, he falls into bondage to other wealthy people, for whom during the whole of his life he has to work ten, twelve, fourteen or more hours a day, at alien, monotonous, tedious work, often pernicious to health and life. If he is able to settle on the land or to procure work so as to feed himself without want, then he is not left alone, but taxes are demanded of him, and in addition he himself is taken for three, four, five years into military service, or is forced to pay taxes for military purposes. If he desires to use the land without payment, or to arrange strikes, or to hinder other workmen from occupying his place, or if he refuses to pay taxes, then troops are

sent against him, he is wounded, killed, and compelled by force to work and to pay just as before.

So that the working-men all over the world live, not like men, but like beasts of burden who are compelled all their life to do not what is necessary to them, but to their oppressors, receiving in return only just so much food, clothing, and rest as enables them to go on working unceasingly. Whereas that small group of people who dominate the laborers, profiting by all they produce, live in idleness and insane luxury, uselessly and immorally squandering the labor of millions.

And thus the majority of the population of the whole world lives, not in Russia only, but also in France, and in Germany, and in England, and in China, and in India, and in Africa: everywhere. Whose fault is this? And how shall this be put right? Some say that it is the fault of those who possess the land without working it, and that it is necessary to give the land to the workers; others say that it is the fault of the rich who own the instruments of labor, that is, factories and mills, and that it is necessary that the factories and mills shall become the property of the workmen. Others again say that the whole organization of life is to blame, and that it is necessary to change this organization altogether.

Is this true?

II

About five years ago, during the coronation of Nicholas II. at Moscow, the people were offered a free supply of beer, brandy, and buns. When the crowd proceeded to the place where these things were being distributed, a crush ensued. Those in front were knocked off their feet by those behind, and these were crushed by those yet farther back; and no one seeing what was happening in front, they all kept pushing and pressing each other on. The weak were overthrown by the strong, and then the strong ones themselves, suffocated by the crush and want of air, also fell to the ground and were trampled by those who were

pushed from behind and could not halt. And thus several thousand people, old and young, men and women, were crushed to death.

When it was all over people began to argue as to who was to blame for it. Some said it was the police; others the organizers; others that the fault was the Tsar's, who had initiated the silly device of such an entertainment. People accused every one except themselves. And yet it would appear clear that only those were to blame who, in order to obtain a handful of cake and a pot of beer before their neighbors, rushed forward without paying attention to the others, and hustled and trampled them.

Is not the same thing taking place with the working people? They are exhausted, crushed, enslaved, only because for some miserable advantage they themselves ruin their own lives and those of their brothers.

The laborers complain of the landlords, of the Governments, of the factory owners, of the military. But the landowners exploit land, the Governments collect taxes, factory owners dispose of the workmen, and the troops suppress strikes, only because the laborers themselves not only help the landowners, the Government, the factory owners, the troops, but they themselves do all those things of which they complain. If a landowner can profit by thousands of acres of land without cultivating it himself, it is only because the workmen, for their own profit, go to work for him, and serve him as watchmen, keepers, foremen. So also the Government collects taxes from the workmen only because they themselves, attracted by the wages collected from themselves, become village and district elders,[1] tax-collectors, policemen, excise and customs officials; that is, help the Government to do those things of which they complain. The workmen also complain that the factory owners reduce their pay and compel them to work more and more hours; but this also is done only because the workmen themselves lower the wages by competition, and also hire themselves to the factory owners as ware-

[1] Official functions performed by Russian peasants elected for the purpose by the peasants themselves. — Tr.

housemen, overseers, watchmen, and foremen; and search, fine, and in every way oppress their comrades in the interests of their masters.

Lastly, the workmen complain that troops are sent against them if they wish to appropriate the land which they regard as their own, or if they refrain from paying taxes, or organize strikes; but the troops are composed of soldiers, and soldiers are those same workmen, who for personal advantage or from fear of punishment have entered the military service, and, contrary both to their conscience and to the law of God they acknowledge, have taken an oath that they will kill all whom the authorities order them to kill.

So that all the calamities of the workmen are produced by themselves.

They need only cease to help the rich and the Governments, and all their sufferings would cease of themselves.

Why then do they continue doing that which ruins them?

III

Two thousand years ago a law of God became known to men, the law of reciprocity, that *one should act unto others as one wishes others to act to oneself*, or, as it is expressed by the Chinese teacher Confucius, "Do not do unto others that which you do not wish others to do unto you."

This law is simple, comprehensible to every one, and obviously gives the greatest welfare possible to man. And therefore it would seem that as soon as men had learned this law they ought immediately, as far as possible, to fulfil it themselves, and to use all their powers to teach this law and its fulfilment to the rising generations.

It would seem that long ago all men ought to have acted thus, as this law was expressed almost simultaneously by Confucius and Buddha and the Jewish teacher Hillel and by Jesus.

Especially it would seem that the men of our Christian world ought to act thus, recognizing as they do, as the chief divine revelation, that Gospel in which it is explicitly taught that in this law "is all the law and the prophets," that is, all the teaching necessary to man.

And yet almost two thousand years have elapsed and men not only refrain from fulfilling this law and from teaching it to their children, but in most cases they do not themselves even know it, or if they do they regard it either as unnecessary or as unpractical.

At first this seems strange, but when one thinks of how people lived before the discovery of this law, and how long they lived so, and of how the law disagrees with the life of humanity as it has developed, then one begins to understand why it happened that the law was not fulfilled.

It happened because while men did not know the law that for the welfare of all each should do unto others that which he would have others do unto him (the law of reciprocity), every man endeavored, for his own profit, to appropriate as much power as possible over other men.

And having appropriated such power, he had in his turn, in order to profit by it unhindered, to subordinate himself to those who were stronger than he, and to help them. These stronger ones in their turn had to submit to those who were stronger than they, and to help them.

So that in societies which did not know the law of reciprocity, of acting with others as one wishes others to act with oneself, always a small number of men dominated all the rest.

And therefore it is comprehensible that when this law was revealed to men, the small number of those who dominated the rest not only were averse to accepting it for themselves, but also could not desire that those dominated by them should learn and accept it.

The small number of dominating people knew and know very well that their power was and is founded only on the fact that those they dominate are continually fighting among themselves, endeavoring to subju-

gate each other. And therefore they have used and are always using all the means in their power to conceal this law from their subordinates.

They conceal the law, not by denying it, which is impossible, as it is so clear and simple, but by putting forward hundreds, thousands of other laws which they assert are more important and obligatory than this law of reciprocity.

Some of these men, priests, teach hundreds of ecclesiastical dogmas, rites, offerings, liturgies, which have nothing in common with the law of reciprocity, and announce *them* as the most important laws of God, the neglect of which involves eternal ruin.

Others, the rulers, having appropriated the teaching invented by the priests, institute, on the strength of this, State regulations, which are directly contrary to the law of reciprocity, and under threat of punishment demand from all their fulfilment.

Others again, learned and rich men, acknowledging neither God nor any obligatory divine law, teach that there is only science and its laws, which they, the learned, discover, and the rich know, and that in order that it should be well for all, it is necessary that people should cultivate through the medium of schools, lectures, theatres, concerts, picture galleries, meetings, the same idle life led by the learned and the rich, and then, they affirm, all the evil from which the workmen suffer will destroy itself.

None of these classes repudiate the law itself, but they put forward side by side with it such a number of all kinds of theological, State, and scientific laws, that amidst them all that simple, clear, and universally accessible law of God, the fulfilment of which undoubtedly delivers the majority of men from their sufferings, not only becomes imperceptible, but completely disappears.

It is from this cause the wonderful fact has arisen and still arises, that working-men, crushed by the Government and the wealthy, continue, generation after generation, to ruin their own lives and the lives of their brothers; to resort for the alleviation of their position to

the most complicated, or cunning, or difficult means, such as prayers, offerings, meek fulfilment of State demands, meetings, associations, trade unions, strikes, revolutions; but do not resort to *the only means:* the fulfilment of the law of God, which most certainly would liberate them from their calamities.

IV

"But is it possible that in so simple and short an utterance, that people should act with others as they desire others to act with them, the whole law of God and the entire guidance of man's life can consist?" those will say who are accustomed to the complication and intricacy of theological, State, and scientific arguments.

Such people imagine that the law of God and the guidance of man's life *must* be expressed in diffuse, complicated theories, and therefore cannot be expressed in so short and simple a statement.

It is true that this law of reciprocity is very short and simple, but it is precisely this shortness and simplicity which demonstrates that it is a true, indubitable, eternal, and righteous law; a law of God elaborated by thousands of years of the life of all humanity, and not the production of one man or of one group of men calling themselves the Church, the State, or Science. Theological discussions about the fall of a first man, his redemption, and the second advent; or State and scientific discussions about parliaments, supreme authority, the theory of punishment, property value, classification of science, natural selection, and so forth, — may be very witty and profound, but are always accessible only to a small number of men. Whereas the law of acting with others as one wishes they would act with oneself is accessible to all men, without distinction of race, religion, education, or even age.

Besides this, theological, State, or scientific arguments, which are accepted as true at one place and at one time, are regarded as untrue at another place and

another time; whereas this law of reciprocity, wherever known, is universally regarded as true, and cannot cease to be true for those who have once comprehended it.

But the chief distinction between this law and all others, and its principal advantage, is that all theological, State, scientific laws, not only fail to pacify men and to give them welfare, but often it is precisely these laws which produce the greatest enmity and suffering.

The law of doing unto others as you wish others to do to you, or of not doing to others as you do not wish to be treated, if only it were recognized by you, could not produce anything but concord and welfare. And therefore the consequences of this law are infinitely beneficial and diverse, determining all possible mutual relations of men, and everywhere substituting concord and service for discord and strife. Were men only to liberate themselves from the frauds which conceal this law from them, to recognize its imperativeness, and to cultivate its adaptation to life, a science, non-existent at present, would appear, common to all men, and the most important in the world: a science teaching how, on the basis of this law, all collisions could be avoided, both between separate individuals and between individuals and society. And if this as yet non-existent science were established and cultivated, and taught to all adults and children as pernicious superstitions and often useless or harmful sciences are now taught, then the whole life of man would change, and with it those oppressive conditions in which the enormous majority of mankind now live.

V

The Biblical tradition affirms that long before this law of reciprocity was revealed God gave man "His law."

In this law was included the Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill." This Commandment, for its time, was as important and fruitful as the later law of reciprocity,

but the same thing happened with the former as with the latter. It was not directly repudiated by men, but like the later law it became lost amid other rules and regulations, which were recognized as equally or even more important than the law of the inviolability of human life. If this injunction had existed alone, and if Moses (according to tradition) had brought down on his tablets as the sole Commandment of God merely these words, "Thou shalt not kill," men would have had to recognize the unalterable imperativeness of this law, admitting of no substitute. And if men were to recognize this command as the sole law of God, and to observe it strictly, even if only as strictly as some observe the keeping of the Sabbath, worshiping *ikons*, the sacrament, abstinence from pork, and so forth, then the whole life of mankind would change; neither wars nor slavery would any longer be possible, nor the expropriation of the land by the wealthy from the poor, nor the possession by the few of the product of the labor of the many, because all this is founded only on the possibility or the threat of *killing*.

So it would be if the command, "Thou shalt not kill," were recognized as the only law of God. But when the commandments about the Sabbath day, about not taking God's name, and others, were accepted as equally important and on a par with this law, then naturally yet more new priestly ordinances arose, also recognized as equally binding, — and God's greatest Commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," which altered man's whole life, was drowned among them, and not only ceased to be always obligatory, — cases were even found when one could act in complete contradiction to it; so that to the present day this law has not received its proper significance.

The same thing happened also with the law of reciprocity.

So that the chief evil from which men suffer ceased long ago to consist in their ignorance of the true law of God, but in people to whom the knowledge and observance of the true law is disadvantageous, but who are

unable to destroy or refute it, inventing "precept upon precept" and "line upon line," as Isaiah says, and giving them out as equally binding or even more obligatory than the *true* laws of God. And therefore all that is now necessary for the deliverance of men from their sufferings is that they should emancipate themselves from all theological, State, and scientific superstitions, propounded as obligatory laws of life, and having thus liberated themselves, should naturally recognize as more binding for themselves than all other regulations and laws, that true, eternal law of God already known, which gives not to some only, but to all men everywhere, the greatest possible welfare in social life.

VI

"But," some will say, "however just this law of 'not doing to others' may be, it cannot be adapted by itself to every circumstance of life. If men were to recognize this law as always obligatory, without exception, they would have to acknowledge the use of any kind of violence between men as unlawful, for no man desires to undergo violence himself. And without the exercise of violence on some people the safety of the individual cannot be assured, property cannot be protected, one's country cannot be defended, the existing order cannot be maintained."

God says to men, "In order that it should be well for all of you, everywhere and always, observe my law of not doing to others what you do not wish them to do to you."

But men, who have organized a certain system, in the year 1901, in England, Germany, France, Russia, say, "Perhaps things may become worse if we fulfil this law of God given us for our welfare."

We accept a law invented by a group of men, however strange it may be and however bad may be the men who invented it, and we are not afraid of fulfilling it. But a law in accordance not only with reason and

conscience, but explicitly expressed in a book which we regard as the revelation of God, we are afraid of fulfilling this, for fear evil may come of it or disorder ensue.

Is it not evident that people who speak and think thus, speak not of order but of disorder, the disorder in which they live and find profitable?

Order, according to their idea, is a position which enables them to devour the lives of other men, — while disorder occurs when those devoured desire that their destroyers shall cease to devour them.

Such arguments only demonstrate that the dominating minority feel, in most cases unconsciously, that the recognition of the law of reciprocity would not only destroy their advantageous social position, but would reveal all their immorality and cruelty.

These men cannot argue otherwise.

But for the workmen turned off the land, crushed by taxes, forced into the penal labor of factories, transformed into slaves, into soldiers who torture themselves and their brothers, — for them it is time they understood that only faith in the law of God and its observance will deliver them from their sufferings.

The non-observance of this law, and consequently their continually increasing calamities, propel them toward this. It is time the laborers should feel that their salvation is in this alone; that they need only begin to observe this law of reciprocity for their position to improve immediately — to improve just in the degree to which the number of men increase who act with others as they desire others to act with them.

And these are not mere words, not an abstraction like the Church, State, Socialistic, Scientific theories, but an effective means of deliverance.

Theological, State, and Scientific theories and promises offer welfare to the workmen, some in the next world, some in this, but always in a distant future, when the bones of those who live and suffer now are rotten; whereas the law of reciprocity improves the position of the workers at the present moment and without doubt.

Even if all workers did not clearly see that by working on the lands and in the factories of capitalists they afford them the possibility of profiting by the product of the labor of their own brothers, and that therefore by thus working they break the law of reciprocity, or, if, seeing this, they, owing to their wants, had not the power of refusing such work, — still the abstinence from such work even of only a few would, by rendering the position of the capitalists more difficult, immediately ameliorate the position of the rest. And the abstinence from direct participation in the activities of capital and government in the capacities of overseers, clerks, tax-collectors, customs officials, etc. (obviously contrary to the law of reciprocity), would still more ameliorate the position of the workmen, even if all were not capable of refraining from such activities. And further still, the refusal of the workmen to participate in the army (which has murder for its object, the act most contrary to the law of reciprocity), — which nowadays is more and more often directed against the workmen themselves, — would altogether alter for the better the position of the workers.

VII

The law of God *is* the law of God not because, as the priests always affirm about their laws, it has been communicated in a miraculous way by God Himself, but because it unmistakably and obviously directs men to that way advancing along which they unquestionably are delivered from their sufferings, and unquestionably obtain the greatest inner (spiritual) and external (physical) welfare, — not some few particularly chosen men, but all men without exception.

Such is the law of God about acting towards others as one wishes that others should act toward oneself. It shows that men fulfilling it unquestionably obtain inner spiritual welfare, in the consciousness of their harmony with the will of God, and of the increase of love in themselves and in others; and that at the same time

they obtain in social life the greatest possible welfare accessible to them. Whereas divergence from this law entails aggravation of their position.

And, as a matter of fact, to any one who does not participate in the mutual struggle between men, but observes life from without, it is evident that the struggling parties act exactly in the same way as gamblers, who surrender a certain though meagre property for the very doubtful possibility of increasing it.

Whether a workman who has lowered the price of his comrades' labor, or has accepted the service of the wealthy, or has entered the army, will better his position, is as doubtful as the success of the gambler. There may be a thousand events owing to which his position will remain the same or become even worse than before. This fact, however, is certain, that his consent to work cheaper or to serve the capitalists and the Government will aggravate, to some extent at all events, the position of all the workers, and his own together with theirs, — as certain as the fact that the gambler loses control over the sum he stakes.

To him who does not participate in the struggle but observes life, it is evident that, as in games of hazard, lotteries, Stock Exchange operations, only the owners of the gambling houses, the lotteries, the stockbrokers' offices, make their fortunes, whereas all those who gamble are ruined. So also in life: it is only the Governments, the wealthy, in general the oppressors, who stand to win; whereas those workers who in the hope of improving their position diverge from the law of reciprocity only aggravate the position of all workers, and therefore also their own.

The law of God *is* the law of God for this reason, that it defines the position of man in the world, showing him the "best" which he can do for his spiritual as well as for his physical life while in this position.

"Be not anxious," it is said in the Gospel, in explanation of this law; "Be not anxious, saying, What shall we eat or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? . . . Your heavenly Father knoweth that

ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

And these are not mere words, but the explanation of the true position of man in the world.

If man only fulfils what God requires of him, if he observes His law, then God also will do for him that which he requires. So that the law of doing to others as one would wish to be done to oneself relates to God also.

In order that He should do for us what we desire, we must do for Him what He desires of us. And He desires of us that we should act with others as we would wish others to act with us. The only difference is that what He desires of us is needful, not for Him, but for ourselves, yielding the highest welfare accessible to us.

VII

The workmen must cleanse themselves in order that the Governments and wealthy shall cease to devour their lives. Impurity breeds only in dirt, and it feeds on strange bodies only while they are unclean. And therefore for the deliverance of the workers from their calamities there is only one means — that of purifying themselves. And to purify themselves it is necessary that they should be liberated from theological, State, and scientific superstitions, and have faith in God and His law.

In this lies the only means of deliverance.

One meets, at the present time, either an educated or an ordinary, almost illiterate, workman. Both are filled with indignation against the existing order of things. The educated workman believes neither in God nor His law, but he knows Marx, Lassalle, and follows the activities of Bebel, Jaures, in Parliaments, and he delivers stirring orations about the injustice of the seizure of the land and the implements of labor, of transference of property by inheritance, etc.; the uneducated

workman, although he does not know these theories, and believes in the Trinity, the Redemption, etc., is equally indignant with the landlords and capitalists, and regards the whole existing organization as wrong. And yet, give this workman, either the educated or uneducated one, the possibility of bettering his position by producing certain articles cheaper than others, although it may ruin scores, hundreds, thousands, of his comrades, or the possibility of entering the service of the capitalists in a position which gives him a greater salary, or of buying land, or organizing a business himself with hired labor, — and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand will do it without scruple, and defend their possession of the land or their privileges as employers often even more strenuously than born landlords and capitalists.

As to their participation in murder (that is, in military service, or in taxes destined to the support of troops), an act not only morally wrong but most pernicious to their comrades and themselves, the very act which forms the basis of their slavery — about this none of them trouble, and all consent either to pay the taxes for the army or to become soldiers themselves, regarding such actions as quite normal.

Is it possible that out of such men any society can be formed other than the one which now exists?

The workmen lay the blame of their position on the avarice and cruelty of the landowners, capitalists, coercionists; but all or almost all the workmen, without faith in God and His law, are similarly, only on a smaller and unsuccessful scale, landowners, capitalists, and coercionists.

A country lad in need of a livelihood comes up to town to a friend who has a place as a coachman in the house of a wealthy merchant, and begs him to find him a berth at wages lower than those current. The country lad is ready to accept such a situation, but, coming next morning, he casually overhears in the servants' room the complaint of an old man who has lost his situation and is at a loss to know how to live. The lad is

sorry for the old man and he relinquishes his berth, not wishing to act to another man as he does not wish to be done to. Or else a peasant with a large family accepts the well-paid position of steward to a rich and exacting landowner. The new steward, feeling his family now provided for, is glad of the situation; but on entering his duties he has immediately to enforce fines on the peasants for horses which have strayed in the gentleman's fields; he has to catch women collecting dead branches for their fires in the landowner's woods; he has to reduce the wages of the workmen and to compel them to labor to the utmost verge of their strength. And the steward feels that his conscience does not allow him to do these things. He refuses, and notwithstanding the complaints and reproaches of his family, he gives up his situation and occupies himself with something else which yields him much less. Or else again a soldier has been brought with his company against workmen in revolt and told to fire at them. He refuses to obey, and for this endures cruel suffering. All these men act thus because the evil they are doing to others is evident to them, and their heart clearly tells them that this which they are doing is contrary to the law of God, that one should not do to others as one does not wish others to act to oneself. But if a workman beating down the price of certain work does not see those whom he thereby injures, the evil he thus causes to his comrades does not therefore diminish. And if a workman passes over to the side of the employers and neither sees nor feels the injury he is causing his comrades, the injury still remains. It is the same with a man who enters the military service and prepares to kill his brothers if necessary. If he does not yet see, when entering the service, whom and where he will kill when he learns to shoot and to stab, he can at any rate understand that shooting and stabbing will be his work.

And therefore, in order that the workmen should free themselves from their oppression and bondage, they must educate in themselves the religious feeling which prohibits all that aggravates the general condition of

their brothers, even when this aggravation is not apparent. They must religiously refrain (as people now refrain from eating pork, eating meat during fasts, from work on Sundays, and so forth), firstly, from working for capitalists if they can possibly live without; secondly, from offering their work at a lower rate than that current; thirdly, from improving their position by passing over to the side of the capitalists and serving their interests; and fourthly and chiefly, from participating in Government coercion, be it police, customhouse, or military service.

Only by such a religious attitude toward the form of their activity can the workmen liberate themselves from their oppression.

If the workman for gain or from fear is ready to enter the ranks of organized murderers, — soldiers, — without his conscience rebuking him, if for the increase of his welfare he is ready deliberately to deprive his more needy comrade of his earnings, or for the sake of salary to pass over to the side of the oppressors, helping them in their activity, he has nothing to complain of.

Whatever his position he makes it himself, and he himself cannot be other than one of the oppressed or one of the oppressors.

And this cannot be otherwise. Without belief in God and His law man cannot but desire to procure for himself in his short life the greatest amount of welfare, whatever consequences this may entail for others. And as soon as people desire, each one for himself, the greatest possible welfare, independently of the consequences to others, then inevitably, whatever the organization introduced, such men will form a heap with a pointed top, a pyramid, — at the apex the rulers, and underneath them the oppressed.

IX

It is said in the Gospels that Jesus pitied men for their exhaustion and dispersion "like sheep without a shepherd."

What would he have felt and said to-day, seeing men not only exhausted and dispersed like sheep without a shepherd, but millions of men all over the world, generation after generation, ruining themselves in brutish labor, stultified, unenlightened, in the power of vice, killing, torturing each other, — notwithstanding that the means of deliverance from all these calamities was given them two thousand years ago?

The key to the lock of the chain forged around the working people has been placed by their side, and they need only take this key and unlock the chain to become free. But the working-men as yet do not do this, but either undertake nothing and yield themselves to despair; or else struggle and break their bones in the hope of forcibly sundering the unbreakable chain; or else, which is even worse, acting like a captive animal when it rushes at the one who tries to free it, they attack those who indicate the key which would open the lock on their chain.

This key is faith in God and His law.

Only when men throw off those superstitions in which they are deliberately trained, when they believe that the law of doing to others what one desires others to do to oneself is the most important divine law of our time, and believe this as firmly as some now believe in keeping the Sabbath, others in fasting, liturgies, sacraments, and others in the repetition of prayers, or the observance of oaths, and so forth; and when, having thus believed, they fulfil this law in preference to all other laws and ordinances, — only then will the slavery and distressed condition of the workmen be abolished.

And therefore it is necessary that the workmen themselves should first of all, without sparing old habits and traditions, and without fearing external persecution from Church and State, or internal strife with one's relatives, — boldly and deliberately free themselves from the false faiths in which they have been educated, shall more and more make clear to themselves and others, and especially to the young generations and to children, the essence of faith in God and of the consequent law of

reciprocity, and shall follow this law to their utmost strength although it involve temporary disadvantages. Thus the workmen themselves should act.

As to the ruling minority, who, profiting by the labor of the workmen, have acquired all the advantages of education, and therefore can clearly discern the deceits in which the laborers are kept — as to these, if they do indeed desire to serve the working people, they should first of all, both by example and by word, endeavor to free them from those religious and State deceits in which they are entangled, and not act as they now do: that is, while sparing, supporting, and even strengthening by their example these deceits, especially the chief religious ones, offer ineffective and even pernicious remedies, which not only fail to liberate the workmen from their calamities, but even more and more aggravate their position.

When, where, and how this will be accomplished no one can say. One thing only is certain — that this means alone can free the enormous majority of mankind — all the laborers — from their humiliations and sufferings.

There are no other means, nor can there be.

MY REPLY TO THE SYNOD'S EDICT EXCOMMUNICATING ME ON FEBRUARY 20–22, AND TO LETTERS CONCERNING IT

(*April* 4, 1901)

"He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself better than all." — COLERIDGE.

I DID not at first intend answering the Edict of the Synod concerning me, but it has called forth many letters from unknown correspondents, of whom some abuse me for denying what I do not deny, others exhort me to believe in what I have never ceased to believe, and others, again, express a fellowship with me that can hardly really exist, and a sympathy to which I hardly have a right. So I have decided to answer both the Edict itself, showing what is unjust in it, and the letters from these unknown correspondents.

The Edict in general has many faults. It is either illegal, or else intentionally ambiguous; it is arbitrary, groundless, and untruthful, and, besides, contains libels, and incitements to evil feelings and actions.

It is either illegal or intentionally ambiguous because, if intended to be an excommunication from the Church, it does not fulfil those Church regulations according to which such excommunications can alone be pronounced; if, on the other hand, it is a declaration that he who does not believe in the Church and its dogmas does not belong to it, the statement goes without saying, and such a declaration can have no other object than that it should appear as an excommunication, without in reality being such; and this, as a matter of fact, is what has happened, the Edict having been understood in this light.

It is arbitrary, because it accuses me alone of unbelief in all the enumerated points, whereas not only many, but almost all educated people share this unbelief, and constantly have expressed, and do express it in conversation, in letters, in pamphlets, and in books.

It is groundless, because the chief reason which is put forward for its announcement is the great circulation of my seductive false teachings, whereas I am well aware that there are in Russia hardly a hundred individuals who share my views, and that the circulation of my writings about religion is so insignificant, owing to the censorship, that the majority of those who have read the Synod's Edict have not the slightest idea of what I have written about religion, as is evident from the letters I have received.

It contains glaring untruth in its statement that the Church has made unsuccessful efforts to convince me of my errors. Nothing of the kind has ever been done.

It constitutes what in legal terminology is called a libel, as it contains intentionally unjust assertions tending to cause me injury.

Lastly, it is an incitement to evil feelings and actions, for it has called forth, as one might expect, spite and hatred toward me from unenlightened and unreasoning people, reaching even to threats of assassination in the letters I have received. "Now thou art given up to an anathema, and wilt after death go to eternal suffering, and wilt die like a dog . . . anathema, thou old devil . . . be cursed," writes one. Another rebukes the Government for not having yet incarcerated me in a monastery, and fills his letter with invective. A third writes: "If the Government will not remove thee, we will ourselves render thee silent." This letter concludes with maledictions: "I will find means to destroy thee, thou villain. . . ." Then follow indecent abuses. I remarked symptoms of a similar spitefulness when meeting some people after the Synod's Edict. On the very day when the Edict was published, while walking in the streets I heard the words, "Here is the devil in man's image," and if the crowd had been differently com-

posed it is very possible that I should have been beaten as a man was beaten a few years ago in front of the Panteleymon Chapel.

So the Synod's Edict in general is very wicked; and the fact that it concludes with the statement that those who have signed it pray God that I should become like them does not make it better.

In detail the Edict is incorrect in the following: It says that "the well-known writer, Russian by birth, Orthodox by baptism and education, Count Tolstoï, seduced by the pride of his intellect, has audaciously revolted against the Lord and His Christ and against His holy household, and has openly and publicly renounced the Orthodox Mother Church which has reared and educated him."

That I have renounced the Church which calls itself Orthodox is quite correct.

But I have renounced it not because I have revolted against the Lord; but, on the contrary, only because I desired to serve Him with all the powers of my soul. Before renouncing the Church and that unity with the people which was unspeakably dear to me, I had devoted several years to the study of the Church doctrine, both theoretical and practical, the truth of which for certain reasons I had begun to doubt. For the theory, I read all that I could upon the doctrine of the Church, and studied and critically analyzed its dogmatic theology; practically, I strictly followed, during more than a year, all the prescriptions of the Church, keeping all its fasts and attending all its services. Then I became convinced that the teaching of the Church is theoretically a crafty and pernicious deceit, whilst practically it is a collection of the grossest superstitions and sorcery completely concealing the whole meaning of the Christian teaching. (It is sufficient to read the Prayer Book, and to observe those ceremonies which are incessantly being carried on by Orthodox priesthood and regarded as Christian worship, to see that all these rites are nothing but various methods of sorcery adapted to all possible occasions in life. In order that a child which has died should

go to Paradise, it must be rubbed with oil and bathed to the utterance of certain words; before a woman after childbirth can cease to be unclean, certain conjurations must be recited; to insure success in business or peaceful life in a new house, a good harvest, the termination of a drought, the recovery from an illness, to better the condition of a deceased one in the next world — for all this and a thousand other things there exist certain incantations which must be pronounced by a priest at a certain place, and for a certain consideration.)

And I did indeed renounce the Church and cease to fulfil its ceremonies, and expressed in my will that those near to me when I am dying shall not allow any servants of the Church to approach me, and that my dead body shall be removed as soon as possible without undergoing any sorcery or ritual, as any obnoxious and unnecessary thing would be removed to be out of the way of those who are alive.

As to the statement that I "have devoted my literary activity and the talent given me by God to the propagation amongst the people of teachings contrary to Christ and the Church, etc., in writings and letters disseminated in large quantities all over the world by me as well as by my disciples, and that, especially in the precincts of our dear fatherland, I have preached with the enthusiasm of a fanatic the overthrow of all the dogmas of the Church and of the very essence of the Christian teaching" — this is incorrect. I have never troubled myself about the propagation of my teaching. It is true I have for my own self expressed in my writings my understanding of Christ's teaching, and have not concealed these works from those who wished to become acquainted with them; but I have never published them myself, and I have communicated to others what I understand by Christ's teaching only when I have been asked to do so. In such cases I have stated what I think, and have given my books if I had them.

It is further said that I "repudiate God worshiped

in the Holy Trinity as Creator and Guardian of the universe, that I renounce the Lord Jesus Christ, God-man Redeemer and Saviour of the world, Who has suffered for the sake of us men and our salvation, and risen from the dead, that I repudiate the immaculate conception of Christ the Lord and virginity of Mary before and after His birth." That I repudiate the incomprehensible Trinity and the fable about the fall of the first man, which has no meaning at the present time, the sacrilegious story about a God born of a Virgin and redeeming the human race — this is quite true. But God — a Spirit, God — Love, the only God, Source of all — I not only do not repudiate, I recognize nothing else as really existing except God; and the whole meaning of life I see only in the fulfilment of the Will of God as expressed in the Christian teaching.

It is again said: "He does not recognize future life and retribution." If one understands future life in the sense of the Second Advent, of hell with its eternal torments and devils, and of Paradise with its eternal bliss, then it is perfectly correct that I do not recognize such a future life. But eternal life and retribution here and everywhere, now and always, I recognize to such an extent that, standing as I am at my age on the border of the grave, I often have to exert an effort not to desire bodily death, *i.e.*, birth to a new life. And I believe that every righteous act increases the true welfare of my eternal life, and that every evil act diminishes that welfare.

It is also said that I repudiate the Sacraments. This is quite true. I regard all Sacraments as a base and gross sorcery which does not correspond to the idea of God and of the Christian teaching, and, moreover, as an infringement of the most direct injunctions of the Gospel. In the baptism of infants I see a palpable distortion of the meaning which might have been attached to the baptism of adults when they consciously accepted Christianity; in the fulfilment of the marriage ritual in relation to people

who had previously contracted other sexual unions, and in the admission of divorce and the consecration of marriages after divorce, I see the direct infringement of the spirit and the letter of the Gospel teaching. In the periodical remission of sins at confession, I see a pernicious deceit, which only encourages immorality and destroys the fear of committing sin. In anointing with oil, in the worship of *ikons* and relics, and in all those ceremonies, prayers, and incantations with which the Prayer Book is filled, I see the methods of gross enchantment.

In the communion, I see the deification of the flesh and the distortion of the Christian teaching. In ordination, besides an evident preparation for deceit, I see a direct contradiction of Christ's words, which positively forbid calling any one "teacher, father, or master" (Matt. xxiii. 8–10).

Finally, it is said, as the last and highest degree of my culpability, that I reviled the most "sacred objects of belief, and did not shudder at submitting to mockery the most sacred of all Sacraments, the Eucharist." That I did not shudder at describing simply and objectively that which the priest does when preparing this so-called sacrament is quite correct. But that this so-called sacrament is something sacred, and that to describe it simply as it takes place is blasphemy, this is quite incorrect. Blasphemy consists not in calling a screen a screen instead of iconostasis, and a cup a cup instead of chalice, etc. But the most terribly incessant, revolting blasphemy consists in people profiting by all possible means of deceit and hypnotization to induce children and simple-minded people to believe that if one cuts up little bits of bread in a certain way, pronouncing certain words, and puts them into wine, that God enters into these pieces; that he in whose name a piece will be taken out will recover, or if he be dead, his position in the next world will be bettered; and that into him who will eat such a piece God Himself will enter.

Why, it is this which is terrible.

However one may understand the personality of

Christ, that teaching of his which destroys the evil of the world, is so simple, so easy, which so undoubtedly gives welfare to men if only it be not distorted by them, this teaching is completely concealed, completely altered into the gross magic of bathing, rubbing with oil, bodily gestures, enchantments, the swallowing of bits of bread, and so forth; so that of the teaching nothing has been left, and if one ever attempts to remind people that the teachings of Christ consist not in these sorceries, Te Deums, Masses, candles, *ikons*, but in men loving one another, not returning evil for evil, not judging, not killing each other — then the wrath of those to whom this deceit is advantageous is excited, and these men publicly, with inconceivable arrogance, declare in churches, publish in books, newspapers, catechisms, that Christ never forbade oaths, never forbade murder (executions, wars), that the teaching of non-resistance to evil has been with Satanic slyness invented by the enemies of Christ.[1]

It is terrible, above all, that people to whom this is advantageous deceive not only those who are grown up, but, having the power to do so, children also, those very children about whom Christ said, "Woe to him that shall deceive them." It is terrible that these men, for the sake of their petty advantages, commmit this frightful evil and conceal from men the truth which was revealed by Christ, and gives welfare — such welfare as cannot be compensated even in a thousandth degree by the advantage they receive from this. They are like the robber who murders a whole family of five or six persons to carry away with him an old coat and a shilling's worth of coppers. All the clothes and money would be willingly surrendered if only he did not murder them: but he cannot act otherwise. So also with the religious deceivers. One could maintain them ten times better in the greatest possible luxury if only they would cease to cause men to perish by their deceit. But they cannot act otherwise. This it is which is ter-

[1] Speech by Ambrosius, Bishop of Harkov.

rible, and therefore it is not only permissible but obligatory on one to reveal their deceit. If there be anything sacred, it certainly is not that which they call sacraments, but precisely this duty of exposing their religious deceit when one sees it.

If a savage rub his idol with cream, or beat it, I may pass by indifferently without offending his belief, because he does this in the name of his superstition, which is strange to me, and does not concern what I consider sacred; but when men by their wild superstition, however many of them there may be, however old may be the superstition, and however powerful they may be — in the name of that God by whom I live, and that teaching of Christ which has given me life and can give it to all men — when they preach gross sorcery, I cannot remain an indifferent witness. And if I call what they are doing by its name, I only fulfil that which I should, which I cannot refrain from if I believe in God and the Christian teaching. And if they call this disclosure of their deceit blasphemy, it only proves the power of the deceit, and should only increase the efforts of those who believe in God and in the teaching of Christ, to destroy the deceit which conceals from men the true God.

Concerning Christ, who drove the oxen, sheep, and merchants out of the Temple, it was inevitable that men should say he was a blasphemer. If he were to come now and to see what is being done in his name in the Church, he would certainly, with yet greater and lawful anger, throw away all these dreadful robes and apparels and crosses and chalices and candles and *ikons*, and all those things by the means of which they accomplish their magic and conceal God and His teaching from man.

So this is what is correct and incorrect in the Edict of the Synod concerning me. I do not indeed believe in what they say they believe in. But I do believe in much of what they wish to persuade people I do not believe in.

I believe in this: I believe in God, whom I compre-

hend as Spirit, as Love, as the Source of all. I believe that He is in me and I in Him. I believe that the Will of God is the most clearly and comprehensively expressed in the teaching of the man Christ, — to regard whom as God, and to pray to whom, I deem the greatest sacrilege. I believe that the true welfare of man lies in the fulfilment of the Will of God; and that His will consists in men loving each other, and therefore behaving toward others as they desire that others should behave with them; as it is said in the Gospels, "in this is contained all the law and the prophets." I believe that the meaning of the life of every man, therefore, lies only in the increase of love in himself; that this increase of love leads the individual man in this life toward greater and greater welfare; that after death it gives the greater welfare the more love there be in the man; and that, at the same time, more than anything else, it contributes to the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth, *i.e.*, to an order of life where the discord, deceit, and violence which now reign will be replaced by free agreement, truth, and brotherly love between men. I believe that for the development of Love there is but one means — prayer, not public prayer in churches, which was expressly forbidden by Christ (Matt. vi. 5–13); but that prayer an example of which is given by Christ, solitary prayer consisting in the reëstablishment and strengthening in one's consciousness of the meaning of one's life and of one's dependence solely upon the Will of God.

Whether these, my beliefs, do or do not offend, grieve, or perplex any one, whether they hinder anything or displease any one — I am as little able to alter them as I am to alter my body. I have to live alone, and I have to die alone (and that very soon), and therefore I cannot possibly believe otherwise than as I do, preparing to go to that God from whom I have come. I do not say that my belief is the only undoubtedly true one for all times, but I do not see any other more simple, clear, and answering all the demands of my mind and heart. Were I to learn a better, I would immediately

accept it, because God requires nothing but the truth. But to return to that from which I have just escaped with such sufferings, I decidedly cannot, as a flying bird cannot return into the eggshell from which it has come.

Coleridge has said: "He who begins by loving Christianity better than Truth, will proceed by loving his own sect or Church better than Christianity, and end by loving himself" (his own peace) "better than all."

I have advanced in the opposite way. I began by loving my Orthodox faith more than my peace; then I loved Christianity more than my Church; and now I love the Truth more than anything in the world. And until now the Truth coincides for me with Christianity as I understand it; and I profess this Christianity, and in that measure in which I do profess it I peacefully and joyously live and peacefully and joyously am approaching death.

"THOU SHALT NOT KILL"

On the Death of King Humbert

(*September*, 1900)

"Thou shalt do no murder." — Ex. xx. 13.

"The disciple is not above his master: but every one when he is perfected shall be as his master." — Luke vi. 40.

"For all they that take up the sword shall perish with the sword." — Matt. xxvi. 52.

"All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them." — Matt. vii. 12.

WHEN kings are tried and executed like Charles I., Louis XVI., and Maximilian of Mexico; or killed in a palace conspiracy like Peter III., Paul, and all kinds of Sultans, Shahs, and Khans, the event is generally passed over in silence. But when one of them is killed without a trial, and not by a palace conspiracy; like Henry IV., Alexander II., Carnot, the Empress of Austria, the Shah of Persia, and, recently, King Humbert, then such murder causes great surprise and indignation among Kings and Emperors, and those attached to them, as if they were the great enemies of murder, as if they never profited by murder, never took part in it, and never gave orders to commit it. And yet the kindest of these murdered Kings, such as Alexander II. or Humbert, were guilty of the murder of tens of thousands of persons killed on the battle-field, not to mention those executed at home; while hundreds of thousands, and even millions, of people have been killed, hanged, beaten to death, or shot, by the more cruel Kings and Emperors.

Christ's teaching cancels the law "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth"; but those men who have kept to the older law and still keep to it, who act upon it by

punishing and carrying on wars, and who not only act on the law "an eye for an eye," but give orders to kill thousands without any provocation, by declaring war, — *they* have no right to be indignant when the same law is applied to themselves in so infinitesimal a measure that hardly one King or Emperor gets killed to a hundred thousand, or perhaps to a million ordinary people killed by the order, or with the consent, of Kings and Emperors.

Kings and Emperors should not be indignant when such murders as that of Alexander II. or Humbert occur, but should, on the contrary, be surprised that such murders are so rare, considering the continual and universal example of committing murders they themselves set the people.

Kings and Emperors are surprised and horrified when one of themselves is murdered, and yet the whole of their activity consists in managing murder and preparing for murder. The keeping up, the teaching and exercising, of armies with which Kings and Emperors are always so much occupied, and of which they are the organizers, — what is it but preparation for murder?

The masses are so hypnotized that, though they see what is continually going on around them, they do not understand what it means. They see the unceasing care Kings, Emperors, and Presidents bestow on disciplined armies, see the parades, reviews, and manœuvers they hold, and of which they boast to one another, and the people eagerly crowd to see how their own brothers, dressed up in bright-colored, glittering clothes, are turned into machines to the sound of drums and trumpets, and, obedient to the shouting of one man, all make the same movements; and they do not understand the meaning of it all.

Yet the meaning of such drilling is very clear and simple. It is preparing for murder. It means the stupefying of men in order to convert them into instruments for murdering.

And it is just Kings and Emperors and Presidents who do it, and organize it, and pride themselves on it.

And it is these same people whose special employment is murder-organizing, who have made murder their profession, who dress in military uniforms, and carry weapons (swords at their side), who are horror-struck and indignant when one of themselves is killed.

It is not because such murders as the recent murder of Humbert are exceptionally cruel that they are so terrible. Things done by the order of Kings and Emperors, not only in the days of old, such as the massacre of St. Bartholomew, persecutions for faith, terrible ways of putting down peasant riots, but also the present executions, the torture of solitary cells and disciplinary battalions, hanging, decapitation, shooting, and slaughter at the wars, are incomparably more cruel than the murders committed by Anarchists.

Nor is it on account of their injustice that these murders are terrible. If Alexander and Humbert did not deserve death, the thousands of Russians who perished at Plevna, and of Italians who perished in Abyssinia, deserved it still less. No, it is not because of their cruelty and injustice these murders are terrible, but because of the want of reason in those who perpetrate them.

If the regicides commit murder under the influence of feelings of indignation evoked by witnessing the sufferings of the enslaved people, for which sufferings they hold Alexander II., Carnot, or Humbert responsible, or because they are influenced by personal desire for revenge, — however immoral such conduct may be, still it is comprehensible; but how can an organized body of Anarchists such as those by whom, it is said, Brésси was sent out, and by whom another Emperor was threatened, how can it, quietly considering means of improving the condition of the people, find nothing better to do than to murder people, the killing of whom is as useful as cutting off one of the Hydra's heads?

Kings and Emperors have long established a system resembling the mechanism of a magazine rifle, *i.e.*, as soon as one bullet flies out another takes its place. "*Le roi est mort — vive le roi!*" Then what is the use of killing them? It is only from a most

superficial point of view that the murder of such persons can seem a means of saving the people from oppression and wars, which destroy their lives.

We need only remember that the same kind of oppression and war went on no matter who stood at the head of the Government: Nicholas or Alexander, Louis or Napoleon, Frederic or William, Palmerston or Gladstone, McKinley or any one else, in order to see that it is not some definite person who causes the oppression and the wars from which people suffer.

The misery of the people is not caused by individuals, but by an order of Society by which they are bound together in a way that puts them in the power of a few, or, more often, of one man: a man so depraved by his unnatural position, — having the fate and lives of millions of people in his power, — that he is always in an unhealthy state and suffering more or less from a mania of self-aggrandizement, which is not noticed in him only because of his exceptional position.

Apart from the fact that such men are surrounded, from the cradle to the grave, by the most insane luxury and its usual accompaniment of flattery and servility, the whole of their education, and all their occupations, are centered on the one object of murder, the study of murder in the past, the best means of murdering in the present, the best ways of preparing for murder in the future. From their earliest years they learn the art of murder in all possible forms, always carry about with them instruments of murder, dress in different uniforms, attend parades, manœuvers, and reviews, visit each other, present orders and the command of regiments to each other. And yet not only does nobody tell them the real name of their actions, not only does nobody tell them that preparing for murder is revolting and criminal, but they hear nothing but praise and words of admiration from all around them for these actions.

The only part of the Press that reaches them, and which seems to them to be the expression of the feel-

ings of the best of the people or their best representatives, exalts all their words and deeds, however silly and wicked they may be, in the most servile manner. All who surround them, men and women, cleric or lay, all these people who do not value human dignity, vie with each other in flattering them in the most refined manner, agree with them in everything, and deceive them continually, making it impossible for them to know life as it is. These men might live to be a hundred and never see a real, free man, and never hear the truth.

We are sometimes appalled by the words and deeds of these men, but if we only consider their state we cannot but see that any man would act in the same way in such a position. A reasonable man can do but one thing in such a position, *i.e.*, leave it. Every one who remains in such a position will act in the same manner.

What, indeed, must be going on in the head of some William of Germany, a man of limited understanding, little education, and with a great deal of ambition, whose ideals are like those of a German "junker," when any silly or horrid thing he may say is always met with an enthusiastic "*Hoch!*" and commented on, as if it were something very important, by the Press of the whole world? He says that the soldiers should be prepared to kill their own fathers in obedience to his command. The answer is "Hurrah!" He says the Gospels must be introduced with a fist of iron. "Hurrah!" He says that the Army must not take any prisoners in China, but kill all, and he is not placed in a lunatic asylum, but they cry "Hurrah!" and set sail for China to execute his orders.

Or Nicholas, who, though naturally modest, begins his reign by declaring to venerable old men, in answer to the desire they express of being allowed to discuss their own affairs, that their hope for self-government is a senseless dream. And the organs of the Press that reach him, and the people whom he meets, praise him for it. He proposes a childish, silly, and untruthful

project of universal peace at the same time that he is ordering an increase of the Army, and even then there are no limits to the laudations of his wisdom and his virtue. Without any reason, he senselessly and pitilessly offends the whole of the Finnish nation, and again hears nothing but praise. At last he enters upon the Chinese slaughter, terrible by its injustice, cruelty, and its contrast with his project of peace; and he gets applauded simultaneously from all sides, both for his own conquests and for his adherence to his father's policy of peace. What must indeed be going on in the heads and hearts of such men?

So that it is not Alexanders and Humberts, Williams, Nicholases, and Chamberlains, who are the cause of oppression and war, even though they do organize them, but it is those who have placed them in, and support them in, a position in which they have power over the life and death of men.

Therefore it is not necessary to kill Alexanders and Nicholases, Williams and Humberts, but only to leave off supporting the social condition of which they are the product. It is the selfishness and stupefaction of the people who sell their freedom and their honor for insignificant material advantages, which supports the present state of society.

Those who stand on the lowest rung of the ladder, partly as a consequence of being stupefied by a patriotic and pseudo-religious education, partly for the sake of personal advantages, give up their freedom and their feeling of human dignity to those who stand higher, and who offer them material advantages. In a like position are those standing a little higher. They, too, through being stupefied, and especially for material advantages, give up their freedom and sense of human dignity. The same is true of those standing still higher; and so it continues up to the highest rungs, up to the person or persons who, standing on the very summit of the social cone, have no one to submit to, nor anywhere to rise to, and have no motive for action except ambition and love of power. These are generally

so depraved and stupefied by their insane power over life and death, and by the flattery and servility of those around them, which is connected with such power, that while doing evil they feel convinced they are the benefactors of the human race. It is the people themselves who, by sacrificing their human dignity for material profits, produce these men, and are afterwards angry with them for their stupid and cruel acts; murdering such people is like whipping children after spoiling them.

Very little seems needed to stop oppression and useless war, and to prevent any one from being indignant with those who seem to be the cause of such oppression and war.

Only that things should be called by their right names and seen as they are; that it should be understood that an army is an instrument of murder, that the recruiting and drilling of armies which Kings, Emperors, and Presidents carry on with so much self-assurance are preparations for murder.

If only every King, Emperor, and President would understand that his work of organizing armies is not an honorable and important duty, as his flatterers persuade him it is, but a most abominable business, *i.e.*, the preparing for, and the managing of, murder. If only every private individual understood that the payment of taxes which helps to equip soldiers, and above all, military service, are not immaterial but highly immoral actions, by which he not only permits murder, but takes part in it himself — then this power of the Kings and Emperors which arouses indignation, and causes them to be killed, would come to an end of itself.

And so the Alexanders, Carnots, Humberts, and others should not be killed, but it ought to be shown them that they are murderers; and above all, they should not be allowed to kill men; their orders to murder should not be obeyed.

If men do not yet act in this manner, it is only because Governments, to maintain themselves, diligently exercise a hypnotic influence upon the people. There-

fore we can help to prevent people killing Kings and each other, not by murder, — murders only strengthen this hypnotic state, — but by arousing men from the delusion in which they are held.

And it is this that I have tried to do in these remarks.

HOW SHALL WE ESCAPE?

(*December*, 1898)

I

A BOY is born in the country. Laboring always with his father, his grandfather, his mother, he sees each year the finest crops from the fields he and his father have plowed, harrowed, and sowed — the fields that his mother and sister have mowed and reaped, binding the corn into the sheaves which he himself has helped to stack — he sees always that his father carries the best of these crops, not to his own house, but to the squire's barn beyond the manor gardens.

As they pass the manor-house with the creaking cart he and his father have piled up, the boy sees on the veranda a richly dressed lady seated at a table spread with a silver kettle, fine china, cakes, and sweets; on the other side of the carriage drive he sees the squire's two sons in shining shoes and embroidered shirts playing ball on the smooth lawn.

The ball is knocked over the cart. "Pick it up, boy," cries one of the young gentlemen.

"Pick it up, Johnny!" shouts the father to his son, taking off his cap and walking by the side of the cart holding the reins.

"What does it mean?" thinks the boy. "I am tired with work while they are playing; yet I must fetch the balls for them!"

But he fetches the ball, and the young gentleman takes it from the coarse sunburnt peasant-boy's hand with fine white fingers and returns to the game without noticing him.

The boy's father has gone on with the cart. The boy runs along the road to catch up with them, kicking up the dust with his clumsy, worn-out boots, and together they reach the barn, which is crowded with carts and sheaves. The bustling overseer, his canvas jacket wet with sweat at the back, and a stick in his hand, greets the boy's father with an oath for driving up to the wrong place. The father apologizes, turns back wearily, lugging at the reins of the exhausted horse, and stops at the further side.

The boy approaches his father, and asks: "Father, why do we bring our corn to him? Haven't we grown it?"

"Because the land is theirs," answers his father, angrily.

"Who gave them the land, then?"

"Go and ask the overseer there. He'll explain it to you. Do you see his stick?"

"But what will they do with this corn?"

"Thrash it and grind it, and then sell it."

"And what will they do with the money?"

"They'll buy those cakes with it that you saw on the table when we passed."

The boy becomes quiet and thoughtful. But he has little time for thought. The men shout to his father to bring his cart nearer. He pulls the horse up to the stacks, climbs to the top of his load, unties the rope, and wearily hands the sheaves up one by one, straining his hernia[1] with each effort, while the boy holds the old mare, whom he has driven for the last two years, brushing away the flies as his father tells him, and wondering, for he cannot understand, why the land does not belong to those who work it, but to those young gentlemen who play about in fancy shirts and drink tea and eat cakes.

The boy thinks about this continually; when waking, when going to sleep, when attending the horses, but

[1] Owing to frequent overstrains, a great number of Russian peasants suffer from chronic hernia. — Tr.

finds no answer. Every one says it is as it should be—and lives accordingly.

So he grows up. He marries. Children are born to him, and they ask the same question, and also wonder; and he answers them as his father answered him.

And they, too, living in poverty and subjection, labor for idle strangers.

So he lives, and so live all around him.

Wherever he goes it is the same; and, according to the stories of the passing pilgrims, it is the same everywhere. Everywhere laborers overwork themselves for idle, rich landlords; suffer from rupture, asthma, consumption; drink in despair; and die before their time. Women overstrain themselves, cooking, washing, mending, tending the cattle; wither, and grow prematurely old, from overpowering and incessant labor.

And everywhere those for whom they work indulge in horses and carriages and pet dogs, conservatories and games, from one year to another; each day from morning till evening dressing as if for a holiday, playing, eating and drinking, as not one of those who work for them could do, even on a holiday.

II

Why is this?

The first answer that presents itself to the rural laborer is, that it is owing to the land having been taken from him, and given to those who do not work it. So that the working peasant either has no land, or so little that he cannot support himself and his family on it, and must therefore either starve, or rent the land which adjoins his own but is possessed by those who do not work it; to rent it consenting of necessity to whatever terms are demanded.

So it appears at first sight, but, on second thoughts, there are peasants who have land sufficient to support them, and yet they too, all, or part of them, yield themselves to the same slavery.

Again, why is this?

It is because the peasant needs money to buy plows, scythes, horseshoes, and building materials, oil, tea, sugar, wine, rope, salt, matches, tobacco, and clothes; whereas the money he earns by selling his produce is continually being extorted from him in the shape of taxes direct and indirect, and by increasing the prices of the things he purchases, so that the majority of the peasants cannot procure the money they need otherwise than by selling themselves as wage slaves to those who have money.

And this is what the peasants, their wives and children, do. Some sell themselves in their own neighborhood, others sell themselves far away in the towns as servants, coachmen, wet-nurses, maids, attendants, waiters, and especially as factory workers, — whole families thus removing to the towns. Having sold themselves in the towns in these capacities, country folk lose the habits of agricultural work and simplicity of life; they grow accustomed to town food, clothing, and drink, and by these new habits yet further confirm their bondage.

Thus it is not merely want of land which causes the laborer to become enslaved to the rich; the causes are to be found also in the taxes and the high prices charged for the necessaries of life, and the luxurious town habits to which country laborers become accustomed when they abandon their villages. The present slavery originated in the land being taken away from the laborers, but it is maintained and increased by taxes, and is confirmed and strengthened by the circumstance that men lose the habit of agricultural labor, and become accustomed to town luxuries which can be obtained only by selling themselves as slaves to those who have money. And this slavery is continually spreading, and affirming, and establishing itself more and more.

In villages men live half famished, in increasing toil and privations — slaves of the landowners.

In towns and factories working-men live generation after generation, physically and morally depraved by

dull, monotonous, unhealthy, and unnatural labor — slaves of the capitalists.

Every year the condition of both classes becomes steadily worse. In the villages peasants are growing more and more destitute as greater numbers leave the country for the factories. In the towns, although the workmen do not get poorer, but, on the contrary, seem to become better off, yet they are growing more and more intemperate, more and more incapable of any other kind of labor than the one they are accustomed to, and are therefore falling more and more into the power of the factory owners.

Thus the power of the landowners and factory owners and of the wealthy classes generally is becoming stronger and stronger, while the condition of the working-men is becoming worse and worse. How can we escape from these conditions, and is any escape possible?

III

It would seem that deliverance from land slavery could be easily effected. The only thing required would be the recognition of a self-evident truth which men would never have doubted if they were not deceived — namely, that every man that is born has the same right to support himself from the land as he has to the air or the sunlight; and that therefore no man has the right to regard any land he does not cultivate as his own, or to prevent others from cultivating it.

But no Government will ever sanction this freedom, for most of the individuals who form Governments are landowners; and on the possession of this property is based their existence. They know this, and hold tight to their privilege, and defend it.

About thirty years ago Henry George suggested not only a reasonable but a perfectly practicable scheme of emancipating the land from private ownership. But neither in America nor in England (in France it is not even spoken of) has this scheme been accepted. Vari-

ous refutations of it have been attempted, but as they failed the idea was simply boycotted.

If this scheme was not accepted either in England or in America, there is even less hope of its being accepted in autocratic States, such as Germany, Austria, and Russia.

In Russia we have vast expanses of land usurped by private individuals, by the Tsar, and the Imperial family, and there is no hope of these people — who without their right to landed property would feel as helpless as fledglings fallen from their nest — relinquishing or permitting any infringement of their right without struggling to their utmost to maintain it.

Therefore, so long as power remains in the hands of Governments composed of landowners, there will be no emancipation of the land.

Deliverance from taxation is as impossible, and even more so. The whole Government, from its head, the Sovereign, down to the last official, lives by taxation. Therefore the suppression of taxes by Governments themselves is as impossible as the destruction of a man's only means of existence by the man himself.

It is true that some Governments are apparently attempting to relieve the people from the burden of general taxation by means of income taxes drawn from the wealthy classes, increasing such taxes as the income grows. But this transference from one class of taxation to another cannot alleviate the condition of the people, because the monied classes, *i.e.*, merchants, landowners, and capitalists, proportionately with the increase of taxation will augment the prices of rents, land, and all necessities of life, and will lower wages, so that the whole weight of taxation will still be borne by the working-classes.

Numbers of measures have been suggested by contemporary scientists for liberating the working-classes from the slavery caused by the capitalistic appropriation of the instruments of production; in consequence of which measures it is believed that the workmen's wages must continually increase, their working hours continu-

ally decrease, and ultimately all instruments of production must pass from the hands of the masters to those of the workers. The workers thus becoming possessed of all factories and workshops will no longer be obliged to surrender a part of their labor to the capitalist, but will receive full exchange for their toil, and all articles of consumption necessary to their life. This plan has been promulgated in England, America, and Germany for the last thirty years, but until now its realization has not been attained, nor is there the slightest approach to its fulfilment. Trades unions and strikes have been organized, by means of which the working-classes sometimes succeed in obtaining higher wages and a reduction of working hours; but as the Governments, bound by the capitalists, do not, and never will, permit the instruments of production to be taken from their present owners, the position remains practically unchanged. And as the men who receive higher pay for less hours increase their requirements, they thus remain in the same slavery.

So it is evident that the slavery of the working-classes will never be abolished while Governments continue: *first*, to maintain landed property in the hands of non-laboring landowners; *second*, to collect direct and indirect taxes; and *third*, to defend and uphold capitalistic property.

IV

"The slavery of the working-men is caused by the existence of Governments! If this bondage is the result of the Governments, then, for the necessary emancipation, it is indispensable that the existing Governments should be overthrown, and such new ones established as would grant free use of land, the suppression of taxation, and the transference of capital and factories into the hands and management of the workers."

There are some who proclaim the possibility of such a solution, and prepare for it. But, fortunately (for such action, always connected with violence and mur-

der, is immoral, and detrimental to the end in view, as repeatedly demonstrated in history), such an undertaking is impossible at the present time.

The days are long past when Governments naïvely believed they were ordained for the welfare of the people and took no measure to insure themselves against revolutions (moreover, they had none of the modern means of communication, telegraphs, telephones, railways), and, consequently, were easily overthrown, as in England in 1640, in France during the Great Revolution and after, and in Germany in '48. Since then there has been only one revolution, in 1871, and that under peculiar circumstances.

At the present day, revolutions and the upsetting of Governments are simply impossible. Impossible because Governments, being now aware of their uselessness and perniciousness, and of the fact that no one any longer believes in their sanctity, are guided only by the instinct of self-preservation, and, using all the means they possess, are continually on their guard against anything which might not only overthrow, but even shake, their authority.

Every Government at the present time has an army of officials united by railways, telegraphs, and telephones; it has fortresses and prisons, with all the newest improvements of photography and anthropometrical measurements; explosive mines, artillery, and rifles, and all the most perfected instruments of coercion in existence. And as soon as any new appliance appears, it is immediately adopted by Governments for their purpose of self-preservation.

They maintain organizations of spies, of bribed clergy, bribed scientists and artists, and a corrupted press. And above all, every Government has at its disposal a mass of officers perverted by patriotism, money, and hypnotism, and millions of physically strong and morally undeveloped twenty-one-year-old children called soldiers; or a conglomeration of hirelings stupefied by discipline and ready for any crime their commanders may direct them to commit.

Therefore it is impossible at the present time to abolish by force a Government which possesses such resources and is continually on its guard. No Government will ever permit it. And as long as Governments exist they will maintain taxation and private ownership of land and capital, because great landowners and capitalists, and officials paid from the taxes, form the Governments.

Every attempt of the working-men to take possession of the land belonging to private owners will certainly end as it has always ended, by soldiers coming and punishing and dispersing those who are endeavoring to get the land. Every attempt to avoid paying taxes will also end in the same way — soldiers will come, will seize what is required to meet the taxes, and severely chastise those who refuse what is demanded. This will also happen to those who will attempt — I do not say to seize the instruments of production and the factories — but even to merely sustain a strike or prevent other workmen from lowering the price of labor; soldiers will come and disperse the offenders, as is always occurring in Europe and Russia.

While soldiers are in the hands of Governments which exist by taxation, and are bound by the owners of land and capital, no revolution is possible. Therefore, so long as Governments have the armies at their command, the system of society will always be in accordance with the wishes of those who have that command.

V

The question therefore naturally presents itself — who are these soldiers?

They are the very men who have been robbed of their land, and from whom taxes are extorted, and who are wage slaves to the capitalists.

Why then do these soldiers go against themselves? They cannot do otherwise, because, by a long course of training, so-called "religious" education and hypnotism,

they have been reduced to a state in which they can no longer reason, but only obey.

The Governments, having in their hands the money extorted from the people, bribe with this money various kinds of officials to enlist soldiers, and then hire military commanders to train them (*i.e.*, to deprive these men of their human consciousness), but above all it bribes with this money schoolmasters and clergy, who in various ways instil into children and adults the idea that soldiering — *i.e.*, preparation for murder — is not only an occupation useful to mankind, but a righteous and godly one.

And year after year, although these men see that they and their like contribute to the enslaving of the people by the wealthy and governing classes, they submissively continue to become soldiers, and having done so, unmurmuringly fulfil all that is demanded of them, be it not only the evident ill-treatment of their fellows, but even the murder of their parents.

Bribed officials, military teachers, and the clergy prepare soldiers by stupefying them. Soldiers, at the command of their superiors, and with threats of imprisonment and death, despoil the land of its wealth by means of taxes, and appropriate the profits of factories and commerce in the interests of the ruling classes. In their turn these ruling classes spend part of this money in bribing the officials, military teachers, and clergy,— and so the circle is complete, and no escape is possible.

VI

The solution proposed by revolutionists to meet force by force, is manifestly impossible. Governments who already possess a disciplined force will never permit the formation of a similarly disciplined opposing force. All such attempts during the last century show how futile they are.

Nor can the solution be found in the suggestion of certain Socialists: to organize a great economical power

which would be able to overcome the united forces of capitalism. The trades unions will never, with their few millions of money, be able to compete with the economic power of multi-millionaires always upheld by military force.

Equally impracticable is the proposal of other Socialists: that of gaining the majority in Parliaments. No majority in Parliament will be able to carry anything inimical to the Government so long as the Government has the troops at its command. If at any moment the decisions of a Parliament were to threaten the interests of the ruling classes, the Government would dissolve and disperse such a Parliament, as always has been and ever will be the case while the army is in the hands of the Government.

The dissemination of socialistic ideas among the troops will not effect anything. The hypnotism of the army is so cleverly devised that the most free-thinking and intelligent man, while he remains in the army, will always fulfil what is demanded of him.

Escape, therefore, is to be found neither in revolutions nor through Socialism.

If there be a way of escape it is one hitherto unrecognized, which nevertheless can alone undoubtedly abolish the whole complex, ingenious, and ancient governmental machinery for the enslavement of the people.

It consists in refusing to enter the military service while one has not yet become subjected to the stupefying and depraving influence of discipline. This solution is the only one, and at the same time it is the undeniable obligation of every individual. It is the only possible way out, because the existing violence is based on these three actions of Governments: on the spoliation of the people, on the distribution of the stolen money to those who organize the robbery, and on the recruiting of the people into the army.

No private individual can hinder the Government from robbing the people by means of recruited troops; nor can he hinder it from distributing the money collected from the people amongst those whose help is re-

quired for recruiting soldiers and stupefying them; but he can prevent people from becoming soldiers by refusing to be one himself, and by making clear to others the substance of the fraud by which they are persuaded to enter military service.

Not only *can* every separate individual do this, he is *bound* to do it, because enlistment into military service is the renunciation of all religion, whichsoever a man may have professed (all religions forbid murder), — it is the renunciation of human dignity, and the voluntary submission to a slavery for the one purpose of murder. In this lies the only possible, absolutely necessary and inevitable escape from the slavery in which the ruling classes hold the working people.

The way of escape is neither in destroying force by force, nor in taking possession of the instruments of production, nor in Parliamentary opposition to Governments, but in every man himself, personally, becoming conscious of the truth, professing it, and acting in accordance with it. As to the truth that man must not kill his fellow-man, this is so well recognized that every one is aware of it.

If only men would apply their energies, not to external results, but to that which causes these results, — to their own life, — then the power of violence and evil which at present holds and afflicts humanity would melt like wax before a fire.

RECENT PRIVATE AND OTHER LETTERS

On the Religious Relation to Life

(*February* 2, 1902)

DEAR N . . ., — I quite agree with what you write. I have been approaching this conviction gradually, and have now definitely reached it, as I have expressed in my article "What is Religion and what is its Essence?"

I disagree with you only in one but very important point: It is true that, at the present time, and especially amongst us in Russia, the Church and State deceit present the chief obstacle to the establishment of or even the approach to the Christian life, but one cannot say that the strife with these deceits represents the chief business of a Christian. The business of a Christian, by the means of which he attains all his purposes, including the one which at present in Russia stands before him, is everywhere and always one: to increase one's fire and let it give light to men. But directing all one's attention, all one's efforts, to some one particular object, as for instance, the life of manual labor, propaganda, or, as in this case, strife with this or that deceit, is always a mistake, like that of a man who, during an inundation, instead of directing the water through the chief outlet or repairing the dike which resists the water, should construct dams in his own street, overlooking the fact that the water will come in from other directions.

When I received your letter I wished to write to you reminding you that in strife one should be as wise as serpents and as meek as doves; but this is not enough: one should not for a moment forget the essential gen-

eral aim, and not let oneself be carried away by efforts to attain one particular object. This does not mean that one should not fight against deceits (when one knows that they are the greatest one will do so involuntarily), but one should fight only when the struggle follows as a result of the general effort toward perfection.

Another comparison. One has to protect houses from the possibility of a fire being communicated to all. One can cut green branches and stick them into the earth between the houses. And this may appear to be effective for a day or two. One can also plant small trees, and when they take root and grow up, this will be effective permanently.

It is necessary that our activity should have roots. And these roots are in our submissiveness to the will of God, in our personal life being dedicated to perfecting oneself and increasing love.

My physical health continues to be bad, but spiritually I feel very well, and I can work and do work as well as I am able, more seriously in view of the approaching end.

To the Swedish Group of Scientists, Writers, and Artists, who had expressed their Regret that the Nobel Prize was not given to Tolstoï

(*February* 2, 1902)

Gentlemen, — The fact that the Nobel Prize was not accorded to me was doubly pleasant: first, because it saved me from the painful necessity of dealing in some way with money, — generally regarded as very necessary and useful, but which I regard as the source of every kind of evil; and secondly, because it has afforded to people whom I respect the opportunity of expressing their sympathy with me, for which I thank you all from my heart.

To a Personal Friend

(*December* 15, 1901)

(This letter refers to a revolutionary pamphlet appealing to workmen to take up arms against the Government, secretly circulated in Russia in large numbers. — Eds.)

The pamphlet about street disturbances is very pitiful. Besides being immoral it is impracticable and simply stupid. If I were the Government I should publish such pamphlets at the expense of the State and spread them in millions of copies. Nothing could more radically undermine or render impossible the confidence of the people in those who share the views expressed in this and similar publications.

The proposal of the pamphlet is immoral, because while a soldier has been brought by a whole series of hypnotic suggestions to the condition where he is obliged either to kill or to suffer martyrdom, and is besides so bewildered that he does not see the sin of what he is doing — the man who would obey the author of this pamphlet would be preparing for murder and committing it of his own free will, incited by nothing but the author's very doubtful assertions of the temporal advantages for himself and his brothers of his murderous action.

The proposal is impracticable, because it is inconceivable that unarmed, undisciplined men could ever disarm armed and disciplined men ; and if it were to happen anywhere, — the unlikely chances of which are nine hundred and ninety-nine to one, — then those who succeeded would immediately be crushed by regular military forces from other parts.

And it is stupid because if those people who wish to liberate themselves from murder and preparation for murder were to begin to prepare for murder themselves, they would give their foe the only legitimate excuse for using against them all kinds of violence, and even murder, and of excusing all those committed previously.

I do *not* think it is necessary to make a declaration that I am not in agreement with those who share the views of this pamphlet which advocates street disturbances. For nearly thirty years now I have been repeating from all sides one and the same thing — that the whole matter lies in the spiritual condition of men, that all violence is a sin, and that the violence of those who fight against violence is absolutely senseless. And therefore no sincere man will confound me with revolutionary coercionists; as to an insincere man being able to invent against me any calumny which may be needful to him, against this there is no means of safeguarding oneself; and besides, it is not necessary.

To an Italian Press Correspondent

(*September* 22, 1901)

My reply to your first question, as to "What the Russian people think of the Franco-Russian alliance?" is this: The Russian people — the real people — have not the slightest idea of the existence of this alliance; but even if they knew about it, I am certain that as all nations are for them all the same, their common sense as well as their feeling of humanity would suggest to them that this exclusive alliance with one particular nation in preference to all others can have no other object than to drag them into enmity and perhaps war with other nations, and therefore that this alliance would be abhorrent to them in the highest degree.

To the question, "Does the Russian nation share the enthusiasm of the French?" I think I can answer not only that the Russian people do not share this enthusiasm (if indeed it really exists, of which I am doubtful), but if they knew all that is done and said in France about this alliance they would rather experience a feeling of suspicion and antipathy to the nation which without any rational reason suddenly begins to manifest toward them an unexpected and exclusive love.

Concerning the third question, "What is the significance of this alliance for civilization in general?" I think I am right in presuming that as this alliance can have no other object than war or threats of war against other nations, it cannot fail to be harmful. As to the significance of this alliance for the two nationalities concerned, it is clear that as in the past so also in the future it will be positive evil for both. The French Government, the Press, and all that portion of French Society which praises this alliance, have already been and will still further be drawn into concessions and compromises contrary to the traditions of a free and humane nation, in order to pretend or really to be in agreement with the intention and feelings of the most despotic, retrograde, and cruel Government of all Europe. And this has been and will be a great injury to France. Whereas for Russia this alliance has already had and will still have, if it continues, a yet more pernicious influence. Since the establishment of this ill-fated alliance, the Russian Government, which once was afraid of European opinion and took it into consideration, at present no longer troubles itself about it, being conscious of the support of this strange friendship on the part of the nation which is regarded as the most civilized in the world, and it is daily becoming more and more reactionary, despotic, and cruel. So that this strange and unfortunate alliance cannot in my opinion have any other than the most negative influence on the welfare of both nations as well as on civilization in general.

To a Swiss Pastor

(*August* 26, 1901)

Dear Sir, — I received your letter, and thank you for the feelings which you express in it. I am also very thankful to you for the extracts from A. Sabatier. I regret very much that I am acquainted only by name with this remarkable man. The extracts you quote

concerning his understanding of Christianity prove to me that I ought to be in complete unity of thought and feeling with him, as well as with you and all who share your views.

There is, however, one point in which I do not agree with you, namely, your idea as to the necessity of a Church, and, therefore, of ministers. That is, of persons invested with a certain authority. I cannot forget the 8th and 9th verses of the 23d chapter of Matthew, not because these verses are from the Gospel, but because it is for me a perfectly evident truth that there cannot be any ministers, teachers, and guides, amongst Christians, and that it is precisely this transgression of the Gospel law which has hitherto almost completely nullified the meaning of the true Christian teaching.

To my mind the chief meaning of the Christian teaching is the establishment of direct communion between God and man. Every man who takes upon himself the rôle of intercessor in this communion hinders those he wishes to guide from entering into direct communion with God, and, which is still worse, he himself completely loses the possibility of living in a Christian way. I think it is the height of pride, a sin which more than anything else estranges one from God — to say to oneself "I am capable of helping others to live well, and of saving their souls." All that a man can do who wishes to follow the Christian teaching is to endeavor to perfect himself to the full measure of his strength, to use in this work of self-perfection all his powers, all his energy. This is the only method of influencing one's neighbors and of helping them on the way of righteousness.

If a Church does exist it is given to no one to know its limits, and no one can know whether he belongs to it or not. The most that a man can desire or hope is to strive to become a part of it (this Church), but no one can be certain that he has indeed become a part, and even less can he imagine that he has the possibility and the right of guiding others.

I beg you to excuse the blunt way in which I have

expressed my opinion contrary to yours, and to believe in the feelings of sympathy and respect with which I remain at your service.

To a Russian Priest

(*August* 15, 1901)

Dear Brother T . . ., — Your letter afforded me great pleasure. You are the fourth priest in whom I meet a complete sympathy, not with my views, but with the essence of the teaching of Jesus, the true meaning of which is accessible to children and cannot call forth differences. And this is very joyful.

One thing in your letter gave me a little anxiety. It is your allusion to metaphysics and the Church. I am afraid you have yourself built up some system of metaphysics, or that you adhere to the Church metaphysics, which affords you the possibility of remaining a priest though holding your views. Judging by the fact that you have been in orders for ten years I conclude that you are yet a young man, and might be my son if not grandson; and, therefore, I will allow myself to give you unsolicited advice as to how, in my opinion, a priest ought to act who has freed himself from superstition, and understood the teaching of Jesus in its true meaning, and wishes to follow it.

When men find themselves in a position incompatible with the teaching of Jesus (as a soldier, or a priest, for instance), they construct or accept some complicated, confused system of metaphysics which is intended to justify that position. It is from this snare that I wish to warn you. For a Christian there can be no such complicated metaphysics. All that one can call metaphysics in the Christian teaching consists of the simple, universally comprehensible proposition that "All men are the sons of God — Brothers; and therefore should love both their Father and their brothers, and accordingly behave with others as they would wish others to behave with them." I think that all further metaphysics are from the Evil One, and are invented only

to reconcile the incompatible position we are in with the Christian teaching. There are also priests (I know such) who, feeling the incompatibility of their position with the pure understanding of the Christian teaching, try to justify themselves by the consideration that in their position they can better struggle with superstition and spread the Christian truth. I think such an assertion is even more false. In a religious cause the end cannot justify the means, were it only for this reason — that means which diverge from the truth destroy all possibility of attaining an end which consists of the teaching of truth. But above all, no man is called to teach others (Matt. xxiii. 8–9), but only to strive to make himself perfect in truth and love. And only by such striving (without any thought of influencing others) can man influence others.

Pardon me that I contravene statements you have not said and perhaps do not think, but having received a strong and joyful impression from your letter I wished to express all that I think about the tragic position of a priest who has learnt the truth, and of the way out of this position, and of its dangers.

The best solution of this position, an heroic way, is, I think, that the priest having called together his parishioners should come out to them on to the rostrum, and instead of conducting the service and bowing to the *ikons*, should bow down to the ground to the people, begging them to pardon him for having led them into error.

The next solution is that which was chosen ten years ago by a remarkable man, now dead, a priest from the College of Viatka, whom I knew, and who served in the diocese of ——. He declared to his Bishop that owing to a change of views he could not continue to be a priest. He was called to Stavropol, and the authorities and his family so tormented him that he consented to resume his priestly office. But in less than a year he could no longer bear it, and again refused, and gave up his orders. His wife abandoned him. All these sufferings so exhausted him that he

died, like a saint, without betraying his convictions, and above all without losing love.

This is the second solution. But I know how terribly difficult it is owing to the family relations and to the circumstances of priests, and therefore I quite understand and do not at all condemn a priest who might remain in this position, notwithstanding that he no longer believes in his work. The only thing I have to say, and which I allow myself to advise (I advise the same thing to those Christians from whom military service is demanded), is that I should not use my reason to invent devices which make it appear that whilst doing what is wrong I am doing well.

If man only keeps the truth before his eyes in all its purity, is not untruthful to himself, then he will find a way to act in the best manner according to his strength. A priest who understands the true Christian teaching, should, I think, like every other Christian, firstly, strive to know the truth in its purity and completeness, independently of his position; and, secondly, to reform his position in the direction of the truth he has seen, according to his strength. (This approach is made of itself if the man is sincere.) As to how far a man will approach (for a priest this is especially difficult, his position being not only distant from, but contrary, hostile to, the truth), to what extent, and how he will approach — this is a matter between himself and God, concerning which outsiders cannot judge.

I greet you fraternally, — Yours, with love.

To the Secretary of the Manchester Tolstoï Society

(*August* 15, 1901)

Dear Friend, — You were right in guessing that I should be interested in the Tolstoï Society. So I was. But I am sorry that I have enough vanity left to be interested. I have always held the opinion — and it

cannot change — that to be a member of the old Society started by God at the beginning of conscious humanity is more profitable for oneself and for mankind than to be a member of the limited Societies which we organize for the sake of attaining the ends we are able to conceive. I think the preference we give to our own Societies is due to the fact that the part we play in them seems to us of much greater importance than the one we play in God's Great Society. But this is an illusion only : all the three modes of activity which you mention in your letter will be more surely attained by a man who regards himself as a member of God's Great Society than by a member of Tolstoï's Society. Such a man who is earnest, as I know you are, will, firstly, spread as much as he can the ideas that gave him peace of Conscience and energy in life without minding whether they are Tolstoï's or anybody else's.

He will, secondly, try with all his might to induce people to speak their mind on the most important questions of life.

He will, thirdly, try to give every person with whom he comes in contact as much joy and happiness as it is in his power to do, and will also help those who get into difficulties through strictly following the teaching of Christ.

A man belonging to God's Great Society will also perform many other useful Christian acts which have neither been foreseen nor formulated by Tolstoï's or any other Society.

I own there are some advantages in the union of persons of the same mind who form societies; but the drawbacks of such organizations are much greater than their advantages, I think. And so I think that for myself it would be a great loss to change my membership of God's Great Society for the most seemingly useful participation in any human Society.

I am very sorry, dear friend, to differ from your opinion, but I cannot think otherwise.[1]

[1] This letter was written in English. — Eds.

To A . . . M . . . on the Same Subject

(*October* 5, 1901)

I have received the letters,[1] and have, of course, read them with great interest. . . . Please transmit to them that not only have I nothing against the existence and the name of a Tolstoï Society, — the lower part of my being feels pleasure at the idea that my writings will be the subject of the attention of religious people and will be better understood; but that which is highest in me opposes this thought, and as I myself desire to be free from all bonds and all exclusiveness in order that nothing should distract me from direct immediate communion with God, so also I should desire the same for my friends near to me in spirit. Tell them that what I wrote to them I wrote guided by love, and that I was glad to see from their letters that they are aware of the danger accompanying all exclusiveness, of which I had warned them.

An Earlier Letter and a Diary Entry on "Tolstoïism"

To speak of "Tolstoïism," to seek guidance, to inquire about my solution of questions, is a great and a gross error.

There has not been, nor is there, any "teaching" of mine. There exists only the one eternal universal teaching of the Truth, which, for me, for us, is especially clearly expressed in the Gospels. This teaching invites man to accept his sonship to God, and therefore his freedom or his subjection (call it as you like) — freedom from the influence of the world, and subjection to God, to His will; and as soon as man has understood this teaching he fully enters into direct communion with God and has no longer anything to ask of any one.

[1] Of the members of the Society. — Tr.

It is like a man who has to descend a river which has overflowed and flooded the surrounding fields. While the man is not in the center of the stream but in its flooded parts, he himself has either to swim or to row, and here he may be guided by other swimmers. Here I could help to direct others while myself approaching the bed of the stream. But the moment we have entered the channel there is not, nor can there be, any guide. We are all borne down by the power of the current, all in one direction, and those who were behind may turn out in front.

If a man asks which way he should swim, it only proves that he has not yet reached the bed of the stream, and that the one whom he asks is a bad guide, since he has not been able to bring him to it, *i.e.*, to that position in which one cannot ask because it is senseless to ask. How can I ask whither one should advance, when the stream with irresistible power is carrying me along in a joyful direction?

Men who submit to a leader, who believe and obey him, are undoubtedly straying in the dark together with their leader.

* * * * * * *

The other day a girl came to me asking the question (so usual, so artificial), What must she do to be useful? Talking with her it became clear to me that the great evil from which millions suffer is not so much that they live in positive wickedness as that they do not live according to their own conscience. Instead of their own conscience people take some other person's conscience, higher than their own (Christ's most frequently), and being obviously without power to live according to this other conscience they conform neither to that nor to their own and so live without conscience. I advised this young lady to live not by my conscience, as she wished, but by her own. But she, poor girl, does not even know whether she has a conscience of any kind or not. This is a great evil, and it is most important that men should develop, make clear to themselves, their conscience, and then live

according to that conscience; and not, as all do, choose another person's conscience unattainable to themselves, and then live without conscience, and lie, lie, lie for the sake of appearing to live wholly in conformity with this other selected person's conscience.

I therefore truly prefer a man without principles, a pleasure-loving, unreasoning man, who resists discussion, to one who lives according to another one's conscience and is therefore without any conscience. The former may develop a conscience; the latter never, unless he return to the independence of the former.

To a Persian

(*July* 24, 1901)

I am very thankful for the poem you have sent me. It is of the highest interest, and I think that the propagation of the idea it contains will be very useful not only to the people of your country but also to the inhabitants of all countries. I quite share the idea expressed by the writer — that in order to cure evil one should find its cause, and try to destroy that. He says that the cause of evil is egotism and ignorance. But I should like to add, however, to the word ignorance — "ignorance of true religion." By true religion I mean a religion which is within the reach of all, founded upon reason common to all, and therefore obligatory on every one.

The principle of this religion is expressed in the Gospel by the words: "Do unto others as thou wouldst wish that others should do unto thee." This is the law and the prophets. If this principle were recognized as the chief religious principle by all men, then egotism, which is the readiness to sacrifice one's neighbors' welfare to attain one's own ends, would disappear of itself. So that I recognize as the cause of evil in general, and of wars in particular, solely the ignorance of true religion.

Nor do I altogether agree with you with regard to the brotherhood you suppose possible between States and their rulers. I think that the State which is formed and maintained always by violence not only excludes brotherhood but is its direct contrary.

If men are brothers there can be neither emperor, nor minister, nor general, nor subject, nor soldier. Amongst brothers no one can have the right to command, nor the duty to obey. All must obey God — not men, whose orders are mostly contrary to the law of God.

According to my opinion wars will only cease when every individual has imbibed the religious principle of not doing to others that which he does not want them to do to him, to such an extent that no one will feel able to accept military service; because military service is nothing else than preparation for murder, the act most contrary of all to the principle of reciprocity; because every man prizes his life above everything, and, therefore, to desire to take it from him is to do to another what one least desires done to oneself.

I think that everywhere there are men who profess the true religion, like the Bâbists in Persia, and that notwithstanding the persecutions to which these men are everywhere and always exposed, their ideas will spread more and more, and triumph in the end over the barbarity and ferocity of Governments, and especially over the frauds which Governments try to maintain on their peoples. It will not be the Governments which will abolish war. On the contrary Governments will always endeavor to excite national hatreds in order to render necessary the armies which alone constitute their power and their reason for existence.

Wars can be abolished only by the individuals who suffer by them. They will be abolished only when true religion is so widely spread that the majority of men will be ready to suffer violence rather than commit it, and will render war absolutely impossible by refusing military service.

To the Editor of a Hindoo Paper

(*July*, 1901)

Dear Sir, — I thank you for your interesting letter. I quite agree with you that your nation cannot accept the solution of the social problem which Europe offers it, and which in reality is not a solution.

A society or collection of men founded on force is not only in a primitive state, but also in a very dangerous position. The connection which unites such a society can at any time be sundered, and the greatest calamities overtake it. All European States are in this position.

The only solution of the social problem for rational beings gifted with the capacity of love consists in the abolition of force, and in the organization of a society founded on mutual respect and rational principles voluntarily accepted by all. Such a condition can be obtained only by the development of true religion. By this term I imply the fundamental principles of all religions, which are: First, the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul; and, secondly, regard for its manifestation.

Your religion is very ancient, and very profound in its metaphysical definition of the relation of man to the spiritual All — to "Atman"; but I think it has been perverted in its moral, *i.e.*, practical, adaptation to life owing to the existence of caste. This practical adaptation to life was, as far as I know, established by the Jainists, Buddhists, and some other sects, such as Kabir Panchis, in which the fundamental rule is the sanctity of life and therefore the prohibition of taking the life of any living being, especially man.

All the evil which you experience, — starvation, and, more important still, the humiliation of your nation by factory life, will continue as long as your people consent to become soldiers. Parasites feed only upon unclean bodies. Your nation must conserve its moral purity,

and in the degree in which it will be pure from murder, or readiness for murder, in that degree will it be free from the *régime* from which it at present suffers. I quite agree with you that you ought to be thankful to the English for all they have done for you — for your welfare — and that you should assist them in all that leads to the civilization of your nation; but you should not help Englishmen in their "Government by Coercion," and under no consideration participate in an organization founded on violence.

Therefore it seems to me that the duty of every educated Hindoo consists in the abolition of all the old superstitions which conceal from the masses the elements of true religion, *i.e.*, the consciousness of the divine essence of the human soul and regard for the life of every living being without exception, and in spreading these principles as much as possible.

I think that these principles are implied, if not actually contained, in your ancient and profound religion, and require only further development and liberation from the covering which conceals them. I think that only such a mode of action can relieve the Hindoos from those evils to which they are subjected, and will serve as the most effective means for attaining the aim toward which you are striving.

Pardon me for so frankly expressing my opinion, and believe me, — Yours truly.

To the Editor of the Bulgarian Paper "Free Thought," concerning the Fate of a Young Man who had been tortured in the Penal Battalion for refusing Military Service on Religious Grounds

(1901)

From your letter I can see that the Bulgarian Government is not only brutal and cruel, but also strikingly stupid. (I say the Government, because I am sure that were it not for the demands of the higher Government

the lower officials would not have dealt in so barbarously cruel a way with this youth, who should at least inspire sympathy and respect.) It is comprehensible that the Governments of large States such as France, Germany, and the most foul Government of my country, can and even must act cruelly with such men as Shopof, who by their life and actions indicate the way of moral progress along which humanity is advancing. They (*i.e.*, these Governments) have no other choice, being maintained by brute force (while moral progress consists in substituting for brute force the consciousness of the brotherhood of men); and, therefore, such Governments must repress all manifestations of true progress, as they do, from the instinct of self-preservation. But small nationalities and States, such as Bulgaria, Servia, Switzerland, and others, obviously can attain nothing by brute force. In the struggle by force they will always be crushed by States immeasurably more powerful — by Austria, Germany, England, and Russia.

The rôle of small nationalities does not consist in monkey-like imitations of the large States, addicting themselves to militarism and all the horrors and cruelties connected with it (as we see they do, be it only in this little case with Shopof), but, being free from the burden and brutality of war, in their advancing, according to their power, along the way of moral progress, and indicating this way to the great nations.

This is what Germany did — although not so much in the way of moral, as of esthetic and scientific progress — when she was divided into little duchies and had not yet tasted the poison of brute force which spiritually killed her. Thus Switzerland acts, by showing men an example and the possibility of a combination of freedom and good order.

How well it would be if your Bulgarian nation bethought itself in time, and instead of raising an army, strengthening its discipline, and torturing men, merely that it should not remain behind its straying neighbors who imitate the big nations, and fighting them — if your good, industrious, capable nation were to use all

its strength to establish at home freedom and equality, thus serving as an example for others, instead of trying to do something it can't do — frighten its neighbors with its disciplined army. How well this would be!

Whereas such actions as the torture of Shopof not only cover with ignominy the Government which commits them, but also inspire a bad opinion of the society which tacitly submits to such dishonest things. Shopof is intentionally being tortured as a soldier, whereas he from the very beginning refused to be enlisted in the Army; and that not out of caprice or unwillingness to be useful to men, but because military service, having murder for its object, is not compatible with that Christian teaching professed both by the People and the Government of Bulgaria. And therefore the trial of Shopof as of a soldier who has violated discipline is a lie and a fraud, perpetrated by the Government and its slaves toward a helpless, honest man. Even placing oneself on the standpoint of this Government, which may fear that no one will serve in the Army if it leave unpunished Shopof's refusal, it is clear that all it can do, not only for the maintenance of justice, but also from the instinct of self-preservation, is to compel him to go through some social service not in opposition to his faith.

On Reason, Faith, and Prayer

(*January*, 1901)

I. — REASON

You ask me what my Christian creed is. You have read my "Short Exposition of the Gospels," and you know, therefore, how I understand the teaching of Jesus.

If, however, you wish to know what I consider the essential meaning of the teaching: in my opinion the essential meaning, which I should like to transmit to all

mankind, and in which I wish all children could be educated, consists in this, that *man has come into the world not by his own will but by the will of Him that sent him.* And that man should know what He who sent him into this world requires, reason has been bestowed on him, by the help of which, if he truly desire it, he can always know the will of God — he can always know what He who sent him into the world requires of him.

The Pharisees and Scribes of our time always say that one should not believe in reason, because it will deceive, but that one should believe them and they will not deceive. But what they say is untrue. If one believes in men, and, as the Gospels say, "in the traditions of men," then we shall all crawl astray from each other like blind puppies, and hate each other, as we do now: the Christian Churchman hates the Mohammedan, the Mohammedan hates the Christian, and the Christians themselves hate each other; the (Greek) Orthodox hates the Catholic, the Old Believer[1] hates the Orthodox, and so on; but if we adhere to the voice of our reason, we shall all unite, because reason is one and the same for all, and reason alone unites men and does not hinder the manifestation of the mutual love natural to them.

Reason unites us, not only with our contemporaries, but with men who lived two thousand years before us, and with those who will live after us. Thus we profit by all that has been produced by the reason of Isaiah, and Jesus, and Buddha, and Socrates, and Confucius, and of all the men who lived before us and believed in reason and served it. "Act toward others as thou wouldst wish them to act toward thee; do not revenge thyself against those who do evil unto thee, but return good for evil; be abstinent, chaste; not only refrain from killing people, but be not angry against them; keep peace with all," and much else. All this is the product of reason, and all this has been preached equally

[1] An ancient Russian sect. — Tr.

by Buddhists, Confucianists, Christians, Taoists, and the Greek and the Egyptian sages. It is also preached by all good people of our time, and all agree with it.

And, therefore, I repeat, the chief meaning of the Christian teaching consists, in my opinion, in what is expressed in the Gospels, in the parable of the Workmen in the Vineyard, for whose use a garden had been given under condition of a payment to the owner, but who imagined it their own; and in the parable of the Talents, where the meaning is that men must fulfil the will of Him who sent them into life, which will consists in men becoming perfect, "as their Heavenly Father," as it is said in another place; *i.e.*, in approaching as near as they can to supreme perfection.

That the will of God consists only in this is also demonstrated to us by reason, and so clearly that there can be no dissension nor doubt. Every man who has thought of it cannot but see that in all the undertakings of life man does and will meet obstacles, and that only in this work (perfection) need man meet no obstacle; that is, in perfecting himself, clearing his soul from evil, and doing good to all that lives. Neither is this work arrested, destroyed, nor hindered by death, which stops, destroys, and renders meaningless all other worldly undertakings. Death neither arrests nor destroys this work, because the man who fulfils the will of Him who sent him, knowing that what he does is necessary to the Master, peacefully performs it here as long as he has the power, and knows that death destroys neither himself nor his relation to the Master, but that "there" also, although in quite different form, he will be in the same dependence on the Master, and have the same joy of a continually growing participation in the life and the work of the Master, *i.e.*, God.

It is thus I understand the teaching of Jesus; thus would I wish it to be understood by all; and in this I wish all children could be educated. Not to blindly believe the things told them about God and life; and to believe the things they do believe, not because they are told they are the utterances of prophets, or Christ, but

because their reason tells them they are true. Reason is older and more reliable than all the writings and all the traditions. It existed even when there were no traditions and no writings, and it is given to each of us direct from God.

The Gospel statement that all sins shall be pardoned except the sin against the Holy Ghost, in my opinion refers directly to the assertion that one should not believe in reason. Indeed, if we do not believe in the reason given us from God, in what shall we believe? Are we to believe those very men who wish to compel us to accept what is inconsistent with the reason given us by God?

II.—FAITH

You ask, what will give a weak, degenerated, depraved man (as we all are), amidst the snares surrounding him on all sides — what will give such a man the power to live a Christian life?

Instead of answering, and before answering, this question, I will ask you, What does it really mean?

We have become so accustomed to the question that it appears quite natural and intelligible, whereas it is not only not natural and not intelligible, but exceedingly strange and curious for every rational man not educated in the superstitions of the Church faith.

Why does n't the smith hammering iron, or the peasant plowing the field, ask where he will obtain the strength to do the work he has undertaken, but instead does it to the best of his strength, makes mistakes, tries to correct them, becomes tired, halts, leaves his work for a time, rests, and again betakes himself to it? Is not every servant of God in the same position, when trying to live the Christian life, to fulfil the will of God he has become conscious of? Just in the same way such a man, if he be sincere, will live a Christian life to the best of his strength — obey the will of God, and if he makes mistakes will correct himself, will become tired, and rest, and again betake himself to the

same life-work — that of approaching to the best of his strength that perfection of the Heavenly Father indicated to him.

The question as to where one should get the strength for the Christian life only shows that some one has persuaded men that certain means exist, by whose aid men, without their own incessant efforts, strife, without falls, repentance, upheavals, again falls, and again upheavals, can obtain the necessary strength for a good, saintly life. It is this very superstition, that man does not approach perfection by his own slow efforts, but can purify himself all at once and become a saint, which is one of the most terrible and pernicious errors, — and it is this which is strenuously preached by all the Churches. Some assure their disciples that through the sacraments of baptism, confession, communion, man is freed from sin; others affirm that one is freed from sin by faith in the redemption, because the Christ-God has purified us with his blood. Both the one and the other teach that besides this we are purified by petitionary prayer to God that He should pardon our sins and make us good — and not that we should ourselves strive to become better.

This superstition is very pernicious because it contains a deceit.

The deceit consists, firstly, in the supposition that man can become quite pure and saintly; whereas for a living man this is impossible. Man cannot be perfect and sinless; he can only more or less *approach* perfection, regarding this approach as the sole meaning of his life. I even think that life after death will again consist only in advance toward perfection, although in a completely different form. In this personal effort toward perfection lies the whole meaning and joy of life. And therefore if perfection were attainable by external means we should be deprived of the very essence of life.

A deceit, secondly, because through it man's efforts are withdrawn from the thing he has to do — from improving himself — and are directed toward something unnecessary. To rely on sacraments, or belief in

the redemption, or prayer, contributing to the perfecting of oneself, is like a smith, while holding in his hands the iron and the hammer, and possessing an anvil and a well-lighted fire, trying to devise some other means of forging the iron besides striking it with a hammer, or praying to God to give him the strength to do the work.

One might pray to God, and devise other means for perfecting oneself, in the event of obstacles being put before us in this work and if we ourselves had not the strength for it. But in this work of perfecting oneself, or the Christian life, or the fulfilment of the will of God, God does not demand of us something we cannot do, — on the contrary He has taken care to give us all we are in need of for fulfilling His will.

We are here in this world as in a wayside inn in which the master has arranged everything really needful to us travelers, and has gone away himself leaving instructions how we should behave in this temporary shelter. All that we require is within our reach! Then what other means should we devise, and for what should we pray? We have only *to obey our instructions!* So also in our spiritual life: all that we require is given us, and the rest is in our own hands.

It is clear that if we wish to become saints all of a sudden, or to feel ourselves justified, and desire besides this to be rich — if we desire that our friends and ourselves shall not be subject to disease or to death, and that we shall always have good harvests, and that our foes shall be destroyed — then we, too, must ask all this of God as it is done in our churches.

But God has not destined us to anything of this kind. He not only has not ordained us to be perfectly righteous and sinless, but on the contrary He has given us a life the meaning of which consists only in our liberating ourselves from our sins, and so *approaching* toward Him. And He has not destined us to be rich, diseaseless, and deathless, but has given us trials, in the form of poverty, disease, the death of our friends and of ourselves — for the very purpose of teaching us to center our lives not in wealth, health, and this temporary exist-

ence, but in serving Him. And He has given us foes not in order that we should desire their ruin, but that we should learn to overcome them by love. He has given us a law of such a nature that it is always well with us if we fulfil it.

So that we have no need to invent any special means of salvation, nor to ask God for anything. All that we require is given us, if only we follow the instructions both of our conscience, and of God as expressed in the Gospels.

The third deceit, an especially pernicious one, consists in this, that the people who have come to believe that they cannot fulfil the will of God and live well by their own efforts, cease to labor at self-improvement; and not only this, but they lose the possibility of self-perfection. A man need only persuade himself that he cannot do something he has to do, and his hands become helpless, and he will indeed be unable to do what is necessary. A man need only become persuaded that he is ill, and he will be ill. Hysterical subjects feel impelled to scream because they believe they are forced to scream. Habitual drunkards do not recover, because they are persuaded they cannot abstain. There is no more immoral and pernicious teaching than that man cannot perfect himself by his own efforts.

This argument, that for a good Christian life one's own efforts are insufficient, and that some kind of external power is necessary, is like the assertion that reason is not sufficient to obtain knowledge of the truth, but that external indubitable proofs are necessary, which I mentioned in my first letter. In the former case, it is supposed beforehand that something or other exists which will give man the power to live a Christian life and to fulfil the will of God. In the latter case, it is supposed that something exists by which a man can ascertain positively that that which he is told is the absolute truth. It is supposed that some kind of means exists for ascertaining truth, independently of one's personal exertions of reason, and that, complete and absolute truth. But this is as impossible as it is to see the

light without eyes. Truth is ascertained by effort, and cannot be ascertained by any other means. And truth ascertained by man's reason can never be perfect, but only more or less approximate to absolute truth. So that "truth" may be the highest truth accessible to man at a given time, but it can never be absolute and positive truth for all times. No proposition can be an absolute truth for all time, were it only for this, that the life of all mankind, as well as that of individual man, is engaged in, and even consists of, the attainment of more and more perfect truth.

The erroneous and absurd idea that human reason cannot by its own efforts *approach* the Truth, proceeds from the same kind of terrible superstition as the one which asserts that man cannot approach the fulfilment of the will of God without external help. The essence of this superstition consists in the supposition that the complete, perfect truth has presumably been revealed by God Himself: to the Jews it was revealed on Mount Sinai, and then by various prophets; to Christians — by Christ, the Apostles, the Councils, the Church; to the Brahmans, in the Vedas; to the Buddhists, in the Tripitaka; to the Mohammedans, in the Koran.

This superstition is evil, firstly, because it distorts the very idea of truth; secondly, because once one has admitted as positive truth all the absurdities and horrors which are accepted as the revelation of God in the Scriptures, one has to keep on distorting common sense more and more in order to justify all these horrors and absurdities; and thirdly, because having accepted an infallible, external revelation as the source of truth, man ceases to believe in the only means to the knowledge of truth — the exertions of his reason. The man who acts thus is like one who, in search of a road, shuts his eyes and surrenders to the guidance of the first stranger who offers to show him the way, instead of exerting himself to the utmost to find it.

It is said, "How can one believe in reason when we see that people who are guided by it fall into error? Protestants, guided by reason, split up into numberless

faiths, and even one and the same man, trusting himself to reason, passes from one teaching to another. Therefore," it is said, "reason may be mistaken, and one cannot trust it."

But why so? When man believed in one Something, and his reason pointed out nothing more true, he was conscious of the highest truth accessible to him, and was right. Then he became conscious of a higher truth, and was right in acknowledging IT. So also was he right when he became conscious of a yet higher and purer truth. The highest, clearest, truest, which man can see and contemplate, that is for him the Truth.

It may be well and desirable, very possibly, that all men should suddenly recognize one and the same Perfect Truth (although if this were so life would cease), but even were we to admit that this might be desirable, — things do not occur as we would like. It might be very desirable (to unreasonable people) that man should not suffer sicknesses, or that some means should exist which should cure him from all diseases; or that all men should speak the same tongue. But this will not take place merely because we imagine that all men can be cured by our remedy, or that all men can speak and understand Russian. If we do imagine this we only make things worse for ourselves, just as we only make it worse for ourselves when we imagine that the complete and eternal Truth is revealed to us in the Scriptures, in tradition, or in the Church.

This might have been imagined at the beginning of Christianity, when one faith appeared possible; but in our time, when by our sides we can see people of the most various religions all imagining that the complete and eternal Truth is revealed to them and not to us — to imagine that precisely we, who have been born in our faith, possess the complete Truth, as the Buddhists, Mohammedans, Catholics, Taoists, and others imagine — is especially foolish.

So mistaken an idea is especially harmful, because it disunites men more than anything else. Men ought to go on uniting closer and closer, as Jesus teaches, and as

our reason and heart indicate. But dogmas about "revelations" *disunite* men more and more.

Besides this, one should understand also that if man believes in revelation he believes so only because reason has told him that he should believe in such or such a revelation — the Mohammedan, Buddhist, or Christian. Whether we desire it or not, no truth can enter man's mind independently of his reason. Reason is like the sieves attached to the threshing machines, so that one cannot get the grain otherwise than through the sieve. It may be that chaff has passed and still passes through the sieve, but there is no other way of getting the grain. And if we imagine that we can have pure grain without sifting, then we deceive ourselves, and fill ourselves with chaff instead of bread, as Churchmen do.

So that we should not imagine everything is happening as we would like, but remember that everything follows laws established by God. And human life has been so ordained by God that men cannot grasp the whole truth, but are continually approaching it; and by comprehending it more and more clearly they are mutually more and more being drawn together.

You ask my opinion about the person of Jesus; whether I regard him as God; about his birth; about future life; about whom I understand by Scribes and Pharisees; and about the holy communion.

I regard Jesus as the same kind of man we all are, and I believe it to be the greatest sacrilege and an evident proof of heathenism, to regard him as God. To consider Jesus as God is to renounce God.

Jesus I regard as man, but his teaching I regard as Divine, in so far as it expresses Divine truths. I know no higher teaching. It has given me life, and I try as far as I can to follow it.

About the birth of Jesus I know nothing, nor do I need to know.

About future life we know that it does exist, that life does not end with death. As to what that life will be it is not given us to know, because it is not necessary to us.

By Pharisees I mean principally the priesthood. By Scribes I mean men of science who do not believe in God.

Concerning the eating of the body and the drinking of the blood, I think this passage in the Gospel the least important, and that it signifies either imbibing the teaching, or a commemoration, but that neither in the one case nor the other has it any importance; nor does it signify what the Church fanatics understand by it. I have expressed my understanding of this passage as well as I could in the "Short Exposition of the Gospels" (*Gospel in Brief*).

III. — PRAYER

In my last letter I wrote about the futility of prayer, in respect both to the realization of our desires concerning events of the external world, and also to the inner world, for perfecting oneself.

I am afraid that owing to my own fault you will not understand me as I would wish, and I will add here, therefore, some thoughts on the subject of prayer.

One cannot pray for external events, such as that it might rain, or that an individual loved by me might remain alive, or that I should keep healthy and not die, for these events occur according to laws established by God once for all, and so established that if we act as we should they are always beneficial. It is just the same as if a good man has built a house with substantial walls and roof, which shelter me, and I capriciously desire to enlarge or alter the position of the walls, and ask for this.

As to one's inner perfection, one cannot pray for this, because everything necessary for it has been given us and it is neither possible nor needful to add anything more.

But because petitionary prayer has no meaning, it does not follow that one cannot or should not pray. On the contrary, I believe it is impossible to live well

without prayer, and that prayer is the necessary condition of a good, peaceful, and happy life. The Gospels indicate how one should pray, and what prayer should consist of.

In every man there is the divine spark, the Spirit of God. Every man is the son of God. Prayer consists in calling forth in oneself the divine element while renouncing all that is of this world, all which can distract one's feelings. (Mohammedans do very well when they shut their eyes and ears with their fingers on entering their mosques or beginning to pray.) The best method is the one Jesus teaches: to enter alone into one's chamber and lock the door; *i.e.*, to pray in complete solitude, whether in a room, a wood, or a field.

Prayer consists in renouncing all that is of this world, external, and evoking in oneself the divine part of one's soul by throwing oneself into it, entering by it communion with Him of whom It is a part; recognizing oneself as the slave of God; and testing oneself, one's actions, one's desires, according to the demands not of the external circumstances of the world but of this divine part of one's soul.

And such prayer is not an idle sentimentality and excitement, such as is produced by public prayer with its accompaniments of singing, images, illuminations, and exhortations — but is always a help to life, reforming and directing it.

Such a prayer is a confession, a test of one's past actions, and an indication of the direction of one's future actions. Suppose I have been insulted and have an ill-feeling toward the man, and desire evil to him, or do not wish to do him the good I could; or else suppose I have lost my property, or a dear one; or am living and acting not in accordance with my faith. If I do not pray in the right way, but continue to live superficially, I shall not be delivered from the painful feeling of ill-will to the one who has insulted me. So also the loss of property or of the dear one will poison my life. And preparing to act contrary to the demands of my conscience, I shall

feel uneasy. But if I test myself before my soul and before God, all will change. I shall condemn *myself*, not my enemy, and shall search for an opportunity of doing good to him; my losses I shall accept as a trial, and try to bear submissively. And thus I shall find consolation, and shall see my way clearer for my actions; shall not, as before, conceal from myself the inconsistency between my life and my faith, but shall endeavor with repentance to bring them into harmony; and in this effort I shall find peace and joy.

But, you ask, in what should prayer consist? Jesus has given us a model prayer in "Our Father," and this prayer, reminding us of the essence of our life (which consists in being in accordance with the will of the Father and obeying it), and of our most usual sins: condemnation, or not forgiving one's brothers; and above all, of the dangers or snares of our lives — this remains until the present time the best prayer, and the most complete, of all which I know.

But besides this prayer, true solitary prayer also consists of all which in the words of other wise and righteous men, or in one's own, brings the soul back to the consciousness of its divine source, to a more vivid and clear expression of the demands of one's conscience, *i.e.*, of one's divine nature. Prayer is a test of one's present and past actions according to the highest demands of the soul.

So that I not only do not reject solitary prayer, which reëstablishes the divinity of the soul, but I regard it on the contrary as a necessary condition of spiritual (true) life. I reject petitionary prayer and public prayer with its singing, images, candles, and even theatricalities, as sacrilegious. I often wonder how this public and petitionary prayer can exist among men calling themselves Christians, when Jesus clearly and definitely said that one should pray in solitude, and that you should not ask for anything, because before you open your mouth "Your Father in heaven knoweth what ye need."

As to myself I will say — without at all thinking that this is good for all, and that all ought to do so — that I have long ago contracted the habit of praying in solitude every morning, and that this my daily prayer is as follows: —

Our Father who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name. And after this I add, from the Gospel of John: Thy name is love, God is love. He who abides in love abides in God, and God in him. No man hath seen God anywhere, but if we love one another then He abides in us, and His love is fulfilled in us. If any man say "I love God" but hateth his brother, he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? Brothers, let us love one another; love is from God, and every man that loveth is from God and knoweth God, because God is love.

Thy Kingdom Come. And I add: Seek ye the kingdom of God and His righteousness and all the rest will be added unto you. The Kingdom of God is within you.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. And here I ask myself whether I really believe that I am in God and God in me? And do I believe that my life consists in increasing love in myself? I ask, do I remember that to-day I am alive, and to-morrow dead? Is it true that I do not wish to live for personal desires and human glory, but only for the fulfilment of the will of God? And I add the words of Jesus from the three Gospels: Not my will, but Thine; and not what I desire but what Thou desirest. And not as I desire but as Thou desirest.

Give us this day our daily bread. I add: My food consists in doing the will of Him that sent me, and completing it. Deny thyself, take up thy cross for each day, and follow me. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and humble in heart, and you will find peace for your soul. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

And forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin

against us. I add: And your Father will not forgive you your sins unless each one of you forgive his brother who has sinned against him.

And lead us not into temptation. I add: Beware of the temptations of the flesh, of ambition, of ill-will, of gluttony, adultery, human glory. Do not give your alms before men, but so that your right hand does not know what your left is doing. And he is not meet for the kingdom of God who having taken the plow looks back. Rejoice when thou art abused and humiliated.

But deliver us from evil. I add: Beware of what issues from the heart: evil thoughts, murders (every ill-will toward men), thefts (profiting by what one has not earned), adultery (even in thought), false witness, slander.

I conclude the prayer again with the words of the Gospel of John: "And we know that we have passed from death into life if we love our brother. He that loveth not his brother has not eternal life abiding in him."

So do I daily pray, adapting the words of this prayer to my actions and my spiritual state.

But besides this prayer I pray when I am alone with myself. I read the thoughts of wise and righteous men, not only Christian and not only ancient; and reflect, searching out before God the evil in my heart, and trying to extract it. I also endeavor to pray during the daily round of my life when I am with men, and passions are getting hold of me. It is in these cases I try to recall to mind all that took place in my soul during my solitary prayer; and the more sincere that prayer was, the easier it is to refrain from evil.

This is all I wished to tell you about prayer, in order that you should not think I reject it.

To a Member of a Russian Provincial School Board

(*June* 20, 1900)

When I taught in schools I had not then elucidated my relation to the teaching of the Church, but not attributing importance to this I avoided speaking of it to the pupils and instead read to them the Bible narratives and the Gospels, directing their attention chiefly to the moral teaching, and always answering sincerely the questions put to me.

If I was asked about the miracles I said that I did not believe in them.

But at the present time, having suffered much in the search for truth and guidance in life, I have come to the conviction that our Church teaching is an unscrupulous and pernicious falsehood and that instructing children in it is the greatest of crimes.

To tell a child who comes to me, an old man, in its search for help and indication as to how it should understand its life, the Source of life, and its relation to this Source and to the Universe, — to tell this child that God created the world and Adam in six days six thousand years ago and then rested, and that Adam sinned, and that in order to mend matters it was necessary to send God's Son into the world so that he could be killed; to tell him all those terrible blasphemous assertions of the Church which definitely destroy in the child all possibility of a conception of God as the Spirit of Love and Source of Life and instil into him horrible ideas of vengeance, temptation, reward, punishment, of the impossibility of improving oneself by one's own efforts, and all the other Church falsehoods which seem to be purposely invented to deprave the child's pure mind and heart, — to say this to a child inquiring for the truth is a most terrible crime, worse than physical violation. Thus I now look upon the teaching of the Church doctrine.

But notwithstanding my complete conviction of this

I would even now refrain, if I were a teacher, from imparting this conviction to the children, out of respect for their liberty and that of their parents, who regard this falsehood as sacred truth. But although I would avoid direct allusion to this, as formerly, every time the children appealed to me with the question I would quite truthfully tell them all I think about it.

And this is what I do at present with grown-up people and children.

Truth is always sacred. And nowhere is the transgression of its sanctity so criminal as in education: "God should be served in spirit and in truth," "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

So all I can say in answer to your question is: Regard it as your sacred duty always to speak the truth when answering the religious questions of pupils, and yet avoid thrusting any religious views upon them.

And if you yourself have not yet arrived at clear answers to the questions try to work them out, at first for yourself and then for them. And if you don't know, then say you do not know.

And this reply will be not only more fruitful than one gathered from the Catechism, but the reply "I do not know" will be sacred because it is true; whereas a reply from the Catechism will be a crime because it is the production of the Father of Lies, according to the word of the Gospel.

On the Religious Education of the Young

(1900)

From the time, twenty years ago, when I first clearly perceived how happily mankind should and might live, and how senselessly they torment themselves and ruin generation after generation, I have kept removing further and further back the fundamental cause of this folly and ruin.

At first, fallacious economic organizations appeared

to be the cause; then State coercion, which upholds these organizations; whereas I have now come to the conviction that the fundamental cause of it all is the erroneous religious teaching transmitted by education.

We have become so accustomed to the religious lie that surrounds us that we do not notice all the atrocity, stupidity, and cruelty with which the theology of the Orthodox Church is permeated. *We* do not notice it, but children do, and their souls are irreparably maimed by this teaching. We have but clearly to understand what we are really doing, when we teach children this so-called religion, in order to be appalled by the dreadful crime thus perpetrated.

A pure, innocent, and as yet undeceived and undeceiving child comes to you, to one who has experience of life, and who possesses, or might possess, all the knowledge now accessible to mankind — and inquires about those fundamental truths by which man should be guided in life. And how do we answer him? Very often, indeed, we do not answer but anticipate his questions, so that he may be provided with an incited answer ready for the time when his question arises.

We answer his question with a coarse, incoherent, stupid, and, above all, cruel Jewish legend, which we repeat either in its original form or, worse still, in our own words. We tell him — assuring him that this is the sacred truth — something which, as we are well aware, is impossible, and has for us no meaning: that six thousand years ago some strange being, which we call God, bethought itself of creating a world, and created it and man; man sinned, and for this the cruel God punished him and all of us, and then redeemed us from Himself by the death of His Son, also God; and that our chief object is to propitiate this God and liberate ourselves from the sufferings to which He has condemned us.

We imagine that there is no harm in this, and even that it is useful to the child; and we listen with pleasure as he repeats all these horrors, and do not realize the dreadful distortion — imperceptible to us because it is

spiritual — that is thereby taking place in the child's soul. We think that the soul of a child is a clear board on which we may write all we choose.

But this is not the case. The child has a vague idea of that Source of all, that cause of his existence, that force in whose power he finds himself, and he possesses the elevated idea of this source — indefinite and inexpressible in words, but of which his whole being is conscious — natural to all rational men. And suddenly, instead of this, he is told that this source is naught else than some sort of personal, self-willed, and dreadful evil being — the Jewish God.

The child has a vague, but correct, idea of the object of this life, which he sees is happiness, to be attained by loving communion among men. Instead of this, he is told that the general object of life is the caprice of a whimsical God, and that the personal aim of each individual is the liberation of himself from eternal punishment — sufferings earned by some one, which God has laid upon all.

Every child also has the consciousness that the duties of man lie in the region of morality. Instead of this, he is told that his duties consist principally in blind faith, in prayers, — the uttering of certain words at certain hours, — and in swallowing a decoction of bread and wine meant to represent the flesh and blood of God; to say nothing of *ikons*, miracles, immoral Bible stories — given as examples of conduct — and the Gospel miracles, with all the immoral meaning that has been attached to the Gospel narrative. Just as though, from the cycle of folklore about various mythical heroes, some one were to construct a complete teaching of life, and were to present this to children as rational history.

It seems unimportant to us, and yet the teaching to children of this so-called religion which is taking place among us is the most dreadful crime we can possibly imagine. Torture, murder, the violation of children, are nothing in comparison with this crime.

The Government, the ruling classes, those in power, stand in need of this fraud; their power is inseparably

united with it; consequently the ruling classes always insist on this fraud being imposed upon children, and maintained in grown-up people by strenuous hypnotism. Whereas those who desire, not the maintenance of the present false social organization, but, on the contrary, its reform, and, above all, those who desire the welfare of the children with whom they come in contact, should endeavor with all their might to deliver children from this dreadful fraud.

Therefore the utter indifference of the young to religious questions, and the negation of all religious forms, even though not replaced by any positive religious instruction, is still incomparably better than the Judaico-ecclesiastical theology, be it in ever so perfected a form.

It appears to me that for any one who has once understood the significance of imparting false teaching as sacred truth there can be no question as to what he should do, even though he possess no positive religious convictions to transmit to the child. If I know that a deception is a deception, then under no possible circumstances may I tell a child, who guilelessly, trustfully questions me, that a deceit, evident to me, is the sacred truth. It would be better if I could answer truthfully all those questions that are so untruthfully answered by the Church. But, if I cannot do this, still I must avoid giving out as truth an evident lie, knowing indubitably that from adherence to truth nothing but good can result. Besides, it is not true that a man can be without anything to say to a child in the way of the positive religious truth professed by him. Every sincere man knows *that* good principle for which he lives. Let him communicate that to the child, or let him demonstrate it to him, and he will do good to the child, and will certainly not injure it.

I have written a book called "The Christian Teaching,"[1] in which I desired to express as simply and clearly as possible what it is I believe. The book has turned out to be unsuitable for children, though it was precisely

[1] To be had of THE FREE AGE PRESS, post free, 1½d.; 64 pp.

children I had in view when I wrote it. If I now had to transmit to a child the substance of the religious teaching I consider true, I should say to him: that we have come into this world and live in it, not according to our own will, but according to the will of that which we call God, and that it is well with us, therefore, only when we fulfil this will. This will is, that we should all be happy; and for all to be happy there is but one means: each must act toward others as he would wish that they should act toward him.

As to the questions about how the world came into existence, and what awaits us after death, I would answer to the first by the acknowledgment of my ignorance, and of the anomaly of such a question (in the Buddhist world no such question exists); and to the second I would answer by the conjecture that the will of Him who called us into this life for our welfare leads us somewhere through death — probably for the same purpose.

To a Private Friend, on Suicide

(1898)

The question, "Has a man in general the right to kill himself?" is incorrectly put. There can be no question of "right." If he is able to do it, then he has the right. I think that the possibility of killing oneself is a safety-valve. Having it, man has no right (here the expression "right" is appropriate) to say that life is unbearable. If it were impossible to live, then one would kill oneself; and consequently one cannot speak of life as being unbearable. The possibility of killing himself has been given to man, and therefore he may (he has the right to) kill himself, and he continually uses this right — when he kills himself in duels, in war, by dissipation, wine, tobacco, opium, etc. The question can only be as to whether it is reasonable and moral (the reasonable and moral always coincide) to kill one-

self. No, it is unreasonable; as unreasonable as to cut off the shoots of a plant which one wishes to destroy: it will not die, but will merely grow irregularly.

Life is indestructible; it is beyond time and space, therefore death can only change its form, arrest its manifestation in this world. But having arrested it in this world, I, firstly, do not know whether its manifestation in another world will be more pleasant to me; and, secondly, I deprive myself of the possibility of experiencing and acquiring by my *ego* all that could be acquired in this world. Besides this, and above all, it is unreasonable because, by arresting my life owing to its apparent unpleasantness, I hereby show that I have a perverted idea of the object of my life, assuming that its object is my pleasure; whereas its object is, on the one hand, personal perfection, and, on the other, the service of that work which is being accomplished by the whole life of the Universe. It is for the same reason that suicide is also immoral. Life in its entirety, and the possibility of living until natural death, have been given to man only on the condition that he serve the life of the Universe. But, having profited by life so long as it was pleasant, he refuses to serve the Universe as soon as life becomes unpleasant; whereas, in all probability, his service commenced precisely when life began to appear unpleasant. All work appears at first unpleasant.

In the Optin Monastery, for more than thirty years, there lay on the floor a monk smitten with paralysis, who had the use of his left hand only. The doctors said that he was sure to suffer much, but not only did he refrain from complaining of his position, but incessantly making the sign of the cross, and looking at the *ikons*, he smilingly expressed his gratitude to God and joy in that spark of life which flickered in him. Tens of thousands of visitors came to see him; and it is difficult to imagine all the good which flowed into the world through this man, though deprived of the possibility of any activity. Certainly he did more good than thousands and thousands of healthy people who

imagine that in various institutions they are serving the world.

While there is life in man he can perfect himself, and serve the Universe. But he can serve the Universe only by perfecting himself, and perfect himself only by serving the Universe.

To the Russian Ministers of the Interior and of Justice

(*April* 20, 1896)

Dear Sir, — I address you as man to man, with feelings of respect and good-will, in which feelings I beg you also to accept my letter. Only with sincere feelings of this kind are mutual understanding and agreement possible. The matter about which I write concerns the persecutions endured at the hands of the officials of your Department by those persons who possess certain writings of mine which are prohibited in Russia, and lend them to others who desire to read them. As far as I know many different persons have been subjected to such persecutions. One of the last cases was that of a woman doctor of Tula, Miss N——, who was searched, put into prison, and is now being cross-examined by the Public Prosecutor, accused of spreading my writings.

This case of Miss N——, a woman no longer young, of weak health, exceedingly nervous, highly respected for her fine nature, and who has gained the universal love of all who know her, is especially striking. The occasion arose from the following circumstance: Miss N—— is well known to me and is a friend of my daughter. A workman in Tula had written to me several times asking for the loan of my book, "What I Believe." Not having a copy at my disposal and not knowing the man, I left several of his letters without answering. But having again received a letter from him this winter with the same request, I transmitted it to my daughter, asking her to send him the book he

desired if she had it. My daughter not having a copy, but remembering that in the same town (Tula) from which he wrote Miss N—— was living, who possessed some of my prohibited writings, she sent her card to the applicant, requesting that a copy of one of these books should be given to the bearer on presentation to Miss N——. This card, which was discovered, served as the occasion for the arrest of Miss N——, and of all the persecutions to which she was submitted.

I think that measures of this kind are unreasonable, useless, cruel, and above all unjust. They are unreasonable because there neither is nor can be any reason why Miss N—— was alone chosen as a victim out of those thousands of people who have my prohibited writings and lend them. They are useless because they do not attain any end; they do not succeed in checking anything, as the evil they are supposed to check continues amongst thousands of people, all of whom it is not possible to arrest and keep in prisons. They are cruel, because for many weak and nervous individuals, such as Miss N——, police raids, cross-examinations, and especially imprisonment may be the causes of severe nervous complaints (which was the case with Miss N——), and even of death. But, above all, these measures are in the highest degree unjust because they are not directed against the person from whom emanates the activity which the Government regards as evil.

In the present case I am this person. I write these books, and in personal intercourse spread those views which the Government regards as evil; and therefore if the Government desires to counteract the development of this evil, it should direct against me all the measures it now applies against those who casually come under its influence, and who are to blame only because they possess the prohibited books which interest them and lend them to their acquaintances. The Government should act thus for this reason also, that I not only do not conceal this activity of mine, but categorically, by this very letter, declare that I wrote and circulated

those books which the Government regards as pernicious, and still continue to write and circulate in books and letters and conversations similar ideas to those expressed in the books.

The essence of these ideas is, that the unmistakable law of God has been revealed to men, that this law stands higher than all the human laws, and that, in accordance with this law, we should not be in enmity with nor coerce each other, but, on the contrary, should help each other — should act with others as we would wish others to act with us.

These are the thoughts, with the practical inferences they imply, which I have expressed as well as I could in my books and am now endeavoring to express yet more clearly and simply in the book I am now writing. I express the same thoughts in conversations, and in the letters I write to people I know and to those I do not know. I express the same thoughts to you now also, indicating the acts of cruelty and violence contrary to the law of God which are perpetrated by officials of your Department.

The words uttered by Gamaliel regarding the dissemination of the Christian teaching: "If this work be of men, it will come to naught. But if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God" — these words constitute a lesson of *true* governmental wisdom in its relations to the manifestations of spiritual activity of men. If this activity be false it will fall of itself, whereas if it contains the work of God — such as the work of God in our age, that is the substitution of the principle of rational love in the place of violence — then no external efforts can either hasten or retard its fulfilment. If the Government allows the unchecked dissemination of these views they will spread slowly and equably; if the Government, as it does now, subjects to persecution those who have accepted these thoughts and are transmitting them to others, then the dissemination will diminish among timid, weak, and hesitating people precisely to the degree in which it will augment among strong, energetic, and convinced people.

And therefore the process of the dissemination of the work will not stop, and will be neither retarded nor hastened by any means the Government adopts.

This, in my opinion, is the general and immutable law of the spreading of truth, and therefore the wisest thing the Government can do in its relation to the expression of ideas it regards as undesirable, consists in undertaking nothing, and especially in not employing such unworthy, cruel, and obviously unjust measures as the torture of innocent people because they do things which have been done by tens of thousands of other men whom no one persecutes for this.

If, however, the Government wishes at all costs not to remain inactive, but to punish, threaten, and suppress that which it regards as evil, then the least irrational and the least unjust course it could take would be to direct all measures of punishment, intimidation, and suppression against that which the Government regards as the source of the evil, *i.e.*, against me; the more so as I declare beforehand that I will, unceasingly, until my death, continue to do that which the Government regards as evil, and which I regard as my sacred duty before God.

And please do not think that in asking you to direct against me the measures used against some of my acquaintances I imagine that their application to me would create any kind of difficulty to the Government — that my popularity or my social position protects me from police raids, cross-examinations, exile, imprisonment, and other severer acts of violence. I not only do not think so, but am persuaded that if the Government were to act vigorously with me, to exile me, imprison me, or apply a yet more extreme measure, this would not create any particular difficulty, and that public opinion would not only not be revolted, but the majority would completely approve of such action, and say that it should have been done long ago.

God is my witness that in writing this letter I am not surrendering to a desire for bravado, or to show off in some way, but am prompted by a moral demand, which

consists in relieving innocent people of responsibility for actions committed by me; and, above all, of indicating to the representatives of the Government, and to you in their number, the cruelty, unreasonableness, and injustice of the measures you use, and of asking you, as far as possible, to cease them, and to free yourself from the moral responsibility they involve.

I should be very glad if you were to answer me in a simple unofficial letter as to your thoughts about what I have expressed, and whether you will fulfil my request to transfer for the future all persecutions, if so it be they are regarded as necessary, to me, the principal person from the governmental point of view who deserves them.

With the feeling of true good-will, I remain, — Yours respectfully.

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